

EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT FIRM SELECTION JUSTIFICATION

08/15/25

After a thorough review of proposals from multiple highly qualified executive recruitment firms, Human Resources recommends Prothman Company to lead the recruitment for our next City Manager.

Prothman's selection is based on the following factors:

1. Extensive Experience in Washington and Oregon Executive Placements

- Prothman has successfully completed 350+ city, county, and executive-level recruitments since 2020, including numerous City Manager and Deputy City Manager roles across Washington and Oregon.
- Their track record includes recent placements in communities similar to Tacoma in governance structure and complexity, such as Chehalis, Battle Ground, Centralia, and the Deputy City Manager for Tacoma.

2. Deep Familiarity with Council–Manager Form of Government

- Many of Prothman's consultants are former City Managers themselves, providing firsthand knowledge of the political, operational, and leadership skills required for success in this role.
- The firm's owner, Sonja Prothman, has served as an elected city council member in a council–manager city, offering additional insight into the relationship between the governing body and the City Manager.

3. Strong Regional Networks and Candidate Access

- Based in Issaquah, WA, Prothman maintains long-standing connections throughout the Pacific Northwest, ensuring access to a highly relevant and diverse candidate pool.
- Their established presence in the region positions them to identify both active job seekers and passive candidates who may not be visible in a purely national search.

4. Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

- Prothman, a minority owned business, has a long-standing DEI philosophy, incorporating targeted outreach, anonymized screening options, and tailored recruitment materials to attract candidates from underrepresented backgrounds.
- The firm actively partners with the Northwest Women's Leadership Academy to promote and prepare women for leadership roles in local government.

5. Proven Ability to Match Candidates to Community Needs

- Prothman emphasizes customizing each recruitment process to the client's culture, values, and strategic priorities.
- Their recent successful placement of Tacoma's Deputy City Manager demonstrates both their understanding of our community and their ability to identify leaders who align with local expectations.

Conclusion

Prothman's combination of extensive regional experience, deep understanding of council–manager governance, strong local and regional networks, and demonstrated DEI commitment makes them the best-qualified partner to conduct the City Manager search. Their proven ability to recruit leaders who succeed in complex, high-profile municipal roles gives the City confidence in their capacity to deliver a robust and diverse candidate pool, leading to a successful appointment.

Post Card Sort: Recommended Competencies for Permanent City Manager

08/19/25

COMPETENCY	
(1) Ensures Accountability*	RESULTS: Focuses on Performance: Holding self and others accountable to meet commitments.
(7) Communicates Effectively*	PEOPLE: Influencing People: Developing and delivering multi-mode communications that convey a clear understanding of the unique needs of different audiences.
(8) Manages Complexity*	THOUGHT: Making Complex Decisions: Making sense of complex, high quality and sometimes contradictory information to effectively solve problems.
(10) Courage	SELF: Being Authentic: Stepping up to address difficult issues, saying what needs to be said.
(28) Drives Results*	RESULTS: Focuses on Performance: Consistently achieving results, even under tough circumstances.
(33) Strategic Mindset	THOUGHT: Creating the New and Different: Seeing ahead to future possibilities and translating them into breakthrough strategies.
(34) Builds Effective Teams*	PEOPLE: Optimizing Diverse Talent: Building strong-identity teams that apply their diverse skills and perspectives to achieve common goals.
(37) Drives Vision and Purpose	PEOPLE: Influencing People: Painting a compelling picture of the vision and strategy that motivates others to action.

- Good distribution across all four factors (Thoughts, Results, People, Self).
- *These competencies are highly correlated with successful individuals at the executive level.



Tips for completing this form:

- Open this form in the desktop app and not the browser.
- All fields with * are required.
- Hover over the cell headings for “screen tips” to provide clarifying information (not all cells have tips).
- Click into the first field (content control) in each section and use the “tab” key to go through fields in that section.
- In sections with inset tables, you can use the tab key to add additional rows.
- You can find job code and job title information by clicking [here](#).
- Do not use acronyms, spell out titles, teams, programs, projects, etc.
- Completed PDFs must be uploaded to a requisition or if you are only updating the PDF, please send to classcomp@cityoftacoma.org.

Section A: General Job & Position Information		
*1. Date form submitted Select date here.	*2. Action Type Update to PDF	*3. Requisition Number Enter information here.
*4. Position Number 50002200	*5. Is the Position Filled or Vacant? Vacant (interim CM is in 50153754	
*6. Current Job Code M0010	*7. Current Classification Title City Manager	
*8. Proposed Job Code Enter information here.	*9. Proposed Classification Title Enter information here.	
*10. Department/Division City Manager's Office	11. Working Title City Manager	
*12. Current Employee's Number n/a	*13. Current Employee's Name Previously Elizabeth Pauli	
*14. Supervisor's Position Number Enter information here.	*15. Supervisor's Title Mayor and City Council	*16. Supervisor's Name Mayor and City Council

Section B: Position Objective
<p>*17. Summarize, in a few sentences, the focus of this position. Consider what the position is required to accomplish, the scope of impact, responsibilities, and how the position supports/contributes to the mission of the organization</p> <p>The City Manager (CM) is the Chief Executive Officer of the City of Tacoma, the third largest City in Washington State. The CM is responsible for directing the operations of departments within General Government, assisting with development and assuring compliance with policies established by the City Council within limits of the City Charter and State and federal laws. The City Manager oversees a staff of more than 2,000 and a biennial General Government budget of approximately \$2 billion. This position is appointed by and reports to the Mayor and eight City Council Members, and is the sole employee of the Tacoma City Council.</p>

Section C: Key & Other Work Activities
<p>*18. List in rank order of importance the key work activities of the position. Include the approximate percentage of time spent performing each activity. Consider the steps it takes to perform an essential duty; answer the questions: “what is done?”, “how is it done?” and “why is it done?”.</p> <p><i>Work activities that are performed less than 5% of the time do not need to be included. Do not copy</i></p>

language directly from the class spec, instead provide specific actions, procedures, materials, tools, etc. and the overall purpose of what the activity achieves.

Rank	Description of Key Activity	% of Time
Select rank.	Directs and oversees the planning, design and development of policies and projects/programs for the organization. Executes the policy and strategic direction set by the City Council by leading and managing the City of Tacoma's staff, departments, and operations. Focuses on delivering efficient, equitable, and effective services, programs, and projects that meet the needs of the community.	30
Select rank.	Reviews the Budget for planning and discussions. Develops biennial budget proposal to the Council and reappropriation recommendations. Makes decisions on the best way to use City funds for the delivery of core services/programs and for other requested projects. Decides when and what funding requests to bring to Council's attention for policy development and biennial budget process. Makes budget cut proposals when necessary.	20
Select rank.	Attends Council meetings and one-on-one meetings with Mayor and Council. Develops agenda to meet the needs of the Council Members' policy direction and makes recommendations to assist them with proposed policy development. Determines best resolution to issues that are shared by Council. Decides when and how constituent concerns shared with Council should be addressed and assign staff to follow up.	20
Select rank.	Reviews and discusses personnel issues, ethics and conduct complaints, personnel policies, and professional development. Discusses labor relations and negotiations. Reviews qualifications for hiring decisions and when to terminate an employee.	10
Select rank.	Manages and directs subordinates; schedules work deliverables and ensures quality control; conducts performance evaluations, coordinates training; and leads the implementation of hiring and discipline/termination procedures.	10
Select rank.	Meets with constituents, business owners/developers and community/civic groups and attends events to promote community partnership. Determines what engagement strategy and content for assigning staff to follow-up as needed or determines what services and programs could be developed or expanded to meet needs. Determines best ways to improve and increase civic engagement and transparency.	10
Select rank.	Enter information here.	Enter number.
Select rank.	Enter information here.	Enter number.
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**To add additional rows right click on the bottom row and select "insert row above". You will have to copy and paste the fields to add the content controls to the new row(s).*

Section D: Scope of Work

***19.** Explain the position's policy impact (policy development and implementation policy).

Responsible for carrying out the policy and strategic direction of the City Council through leadership and management of City of Tacoma's staff, line and operating departments and functions.

***20.** Explain the major decision-making responsibilities and whom these decisions are presented to.

Makes interpretive decisions on behalf of the organization regarding the means for executing the goals established by the City Council, subject to constraints imposed by available technology and resources.

***21.** Explain the budgetary responsibility and/or influence/impact this position has.

Manages and directs the department financial activities including budget development and procurement; monitors and administers budgets, revenues and expenditures from multiple sources and for multiple activities.

Section E: Minimum Qualifications (Education, Experiences, Licenses, Certifications, etc.)

*22. List the required minimum education and examples of degree types if applicable.
Bachelor's degree in public or business administration or directly related field.

*23. List the required minimum years and type of experience necessary.
15 years of experience, including 1 year of supervisory and management experience. *Equivalency: 1 year of experience = 1 year of education

*24. List the special requirements, licenses, certificates or other necessary conditions.
None

25. List any desirable qualifications here:
Planning, coordination and financing a large public sector organization (preferably a municipality; management theory and practice; municipal operations; community and public relations; budget preparation and management; oral and written communications skills; interpersonal skills; principles and practices of administration; supervision and training; applicable laws, codes, regulations; administering city operations; presenting ideas and concepts persuasively in speaking before groups; analyzing situations accurately and adopting an effective course of action; strategic planning for both short and long term vision, priorities and goals.

Section F: Work as a Lead or a Supervisor

*26. **Lead Work** - Does the position have delegated responsibility for training, assigning, organizing, scheduling work and/or reviewing work assignments of others?
 Yes No

*27. **Supervisor Work** - Does the position have direct reports and the authority to recommend hiring of staff, establishing job performance standards, providing coaching and counseling, evaluating employee performance, taking corrective action and recommending disciplinary action?
 Yes No

*28. If yes is selected above, how many full-time equivalent (FTE) employees is this position responsible for?
10-12 City Directors
1 Policy Analyst Sr
1 Executive Assistant

*29. In the table below, list the position numbers, job codes and job titles for each position that this role either leads or supervises.

Position Number	Job Code	Classification Title	Leads?	Supervises?
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*To add additional rows right click on the bottom row and select "insert row above". You will have to copy and paste the fields to add the content controls to the new row(s).

Section G: Attestation & Signature		
By signing this I am verifying that the job duties as defined in this document are an accurate reflection of the work to be performed. The person performing the work assigned to this position meets the qualifications of the classification prior to assignment.		
30. Date Signed Select Date	31. Division or Section Manager Name Enter information here.	32. Division or Section Manager E-Signature

PERMANENT CITY MANAGER RECRUITMENT

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The best approach for engaging the community in a City Manager selection process is to make it *structured, transparent, inclusive, and genuinely responsive* so residents feel their input matters and candidates understand the community they'll serve.

Here's a proven framework:

1. Start with Clear Intent and Ground Rules

- **Communicate the “why”** — explain the importance of the role, the value of community input, and how feedback will be used in the decision-making process.
- **Set expectations** — clarify what's within the community's influence (e.g., desired leadership qualities, priorities) and what's not (e.g., final hiring decision rests with City Council).

2. Use Multiple Engagement Channels

Different people will engage in different ways, so offer options:

- **Public forums/town halls** (in-person and virtual) for open dialogue.
- **Surveys** (online, paper, and multilingual if needed) for broad reach.
 - *Consider how to incorporate the 2024 Building the Community Survey feedback on city customer service, communication, infrastructure, jobs and economy, perception, public safety, safety, social services, overall satisfaction.*
- **Small focus groups** with community leaders, nonprofits, youth, business owners, and underrepresented populations.

3. Be Transparent About the Process

- Publish a **timeline** of key steps and when the public can participate.
- Share **regular updates** via the city website, social media, local media, and newsletters.
- Explain **how feedback is being incorporated** into candidate profiles or interview questions.

4. Make It Accessible and Inclusive

- Offer sessions at varied times/days to reach working residents.

- Provide interpretation/translation services.
- Ensure ADA accessibility for all in-person events.
- Proactively invite groups that might otherwise be left out of the conversation.

5. Show Impact of Feedback

- Summarize what the community said (themes, priorities).
 - *2024 Building the Community Survey*
- Demonstrate how that feedback influenced the candidate profile or recruitment priorities.
- Thank participants and invite them to remain engaged until the appointment is made.

Bottom line: The most effective engagement is *early, ongoing, and two-way* with visible proof that community voices matter in shaping the qualities, priorities, and vision for the next City Manager.