



City Councilmember

Job Description

City councilmembers are the legislators of an area who are elected to decide which services are provided and how they are paid for. They are responsible for representing and staying responsive to the needs of citizens living within their region. This includes communicating with citizens and then giving input on new laws, budgets, city agencies, ordinances, and various other propositions.

Salary

Entry — \$54,000
Middle — \$82,000
Top — \$100,000+

Core Tasks

- Attend and respond to citizens at city council board meetings
- Remain briefed on internal and external risks in environment
- Identify trouble spots in the annual statement
- Digest public concern over certain topics
- Advocate for or against proposed policy measures

Workplace / Environment

- Work hours**
20-30 hours/week
(During budget season additional hours may be required to meet deliverables)
- Environment**
Typically requires an **office space** inside the City Hall
- Travel**
Council members may be expected to add travel time (**400-1,000 miles**) and commuting expenses of up to \$1,000 per year to their budget

Education / Prerequisites

Education Level

Bachelors or Masters degree in varying fields generally expected

Licensing

None

Pre-Job Preparation

Community involvement through volunteering, work experience, leadership in local organizations, and involvement with city concerns

Experience

Soft Skills

- Communication
- Creativity
- Organization

Technical Skills

- Understanding of Local Issues
- Report Writing
- Budgeting/Financial Background



Career Path: Jon Pascal

About Me

Kirkland City Councilmember & Transpo
Group Principal

Bachelor of Forest Engineering and Masters in
Transportation Engineering from the University
of Washington

Early Interests

"When I was in middle school, I took a field trip, and I was able to see the **construction** of the Interstate-90 East channel bridge between Bellevue and Mercer Island. I lived the block off of I-90 growing up, and I was fascinated by the construction. I would ride my bike down there every day and watch the construction activities. That's when I formulated the concept of what a **civil engineer** was."

Altering Life Experiences

"After graduating from the **University of Washington**, I got a job. I was able to attend a **national conference** in Nashville one year before I started my graduate program. The day after I arrived, I received a phone call that no one ever wants to receive. That phone call was from my mom who said one of my closest friends was dead. They had been **hit while they were riding their bicycle** and were killed instantly. It was a completely avoidable collision."

"This person was someone that was very dear to me. I was actually supposed to meet them in Washington D.C., and I was there instead mourning their loss. That was 20 years ago, and that day is still very vivid. It still motivates me to focus on **active transportation safety** and continue to push for safety improvements in our transportation system. That's motivated me in my career and in my elected office."

Solidifying Interests

"In my first job as a **transportation professional**, I love being able to actually **help communities plan** for transportation solutions, and then see those implemented."

"I get to serve on some pretty cool regional **committees**. One is with the Regional Transit committee for King County Metro, as an advocate for transit service improvements, and then there's the Transportation Safety Council for Washington State. Their sole focus is to **improve pedestrian bicycle safety** across the state and I absolutely love that."

About My Job

"We need to embrace different types of technology"

Pros

- "The coolest part of my job really is that I get to do something that I'm **passionate** about."
- "Sometimes it's kind of crazy, but I love it. I love being able to help communities plan for transportation solutions, and then see those **implemented**."
- "I enjoy talking with people and hearing what their **issues** are and what their **solutions** and ideas are."

Cons

- "I'm very **dependent** upon what my clients need."
- "I can bring ideas but they don't necessarily stick because it takes more than just me or someone else to make change—it's a **community-driven** thing."
- People are busy and to make these things successful you do need **engagement**—you need to hear what everyone thinks and it's really hard to reach some people."

City Council Work

- "As an elected official, I like to **advocate** for those sustainable and equitable transportation solutions and policies to make sure that we can get there over time."
- "The government is **client-oriented**, because we provide a service to people. Whether that's street service, police service, or water sewer service, we can often use **technology** to better connect with our customers, such as with city council meetings."

Green Transportation Work

- "For the City of Bellingham we transformed Sammamish Way Corridor into a three lane arterial with buffered **bike lanes**, **sidewalks**, nice **crosswalks**, and improved **lighting**."
- "I just finished a project for Joint Base, Lewis McChord, which is a military base down in Pierce County. It was basically looking at how to **improve access** to the base for all the military personnel, civilians that work there, contractors, and dependents that either live or work on-base and have to commute elsewhere."

Skills

- "Skills like **GIS**, Geographic Information Systems, mapping, and bringing that online, are very important."
- "A lot of our work is going to **cloud** computing."
- "There's just so much there with **technology** and then as we do more we do a lot of report writing."
- "You also need the softer skills sometimes, the **creative** side"

Education/Experience

- "We look for folks that have an **engineering or technology** background because those can often be differentiators for us because so much of what we do is around technology and or engineering."
- "There's so much there with technology and then as we do more I see a lot of that kind of stuff going to the cloud, and you need an **IT** background and an urge to do that."
- "**Urban planning** is always nice to kind of counter the heavy technical side— there's the softer side of what we do."

The Future of **City council Work**

"We have to adapt to what we see out there"

"I think governments, and organizations in general, are slow to change. We need to embrace different types of **technology**. That includes how we communicate with the public. For example one of the things that we're working on is having more of our meetings and our events online recorded, so people can view it at their leisure."