



Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) Executive Director

SALARY	\$230,000.00 - \$255,000.00 Annually	LOCATION	Boston, MA
JOB TYPE	Full Time	JOB NUMBER	EXE-JUL25-ED
DEPARTMENT	Executive	OPENING DATE	07/10/2025

Description

Robert Half Executive Search has been retained by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), the regional land use planning agency for Greater Boston, to lead the search for its next Executive Director—a visionary leader to guide the agency and the region into a future that is more equitable, sustainable, and collaborative. The Executive Director’s primary mission is to implement the agency’s Strategic Plan and to help the region to achieve the goals of the regional land use and policy plan, [*MetroCommon2050: Shaping the Region Together*](#). ([Welcome to MetroCommon 2050 - Metropolitan Area Planning Council](#))

MAPC seeks a seasoned leader who understands both planning and policy; can lead a team of 120 professionals with clarity, grace, and humility; and can serve as the chief advocate for policies and programs that will both support and advance the Greater Boston region. The Executive Director should understand how to manage a budget of at least \$15 million, with funding from all levels of government as well as private foundations, partnerships, and other, unique funding streams; to recruit and retain staff who are innovative, entrepreneurial, and mission-driven; to seek consensus among people with differing views, both within and outside the agency, but also be willing to “swim against the tide” when the region requires it. They will be an individual who approaches crisis management in a calm, steady, and unflappable manner. The Executive Director should bring a deep understanding of municipal governments, which represents the majority of the agency’s Council and Executive Committee membership, as well as have a deep understanding of how it interfaces with both state and federal agencies. The Executive Director should be a skilled communicator, working with staff, board, legislators, regional partners, business and community leaders, state and federal elected officials, and the media to advance MAPC’s mission.

MAPC believes that achieving equity is essential to the sustainable future of the Metro Boston region and the well-being of its residents. An equitable region is one where all residents have access to opportunities that enable them to attain their full potential. Every person has a shot at growing up healthy, receiving a quality education, getting a good job that ensures a good quality of life, and enjoying life into old age.

An equitable Metro Boston is free from discrimination that marginalizes people based on race, sex, religion, disability, national origin, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender identity, family or marital status, income, military status, criminal history, or age. It holds up leaders from marginalized groups and centers the experiences of the disenfranchised.

About MAPC

MAPC is the Regional Planning Agency (RPA) serving the people who live and work in the 101 cities and towns that make up Greater Boston. Established in Chapter 40B of the General Laws, MAPC’s strategic priorities include

sustainable development and preservation; housing; transportation; economic development; and, regional collaboration, especially among cities and towns; advancing equity, and especially racial equity, throughout the region; advancing arts and culture in Greater Boston; and fostering a climate-friendly region, with a focus on reducing carbon emissions and creating a climate-resilient region. MAPC has become a leader in designing and facilitating regional public health collaboratives and promoting municipal and state initiatives through public art. MAPC provides technical assistance and support to its 101 cities and towns; maintains an active and respected regional data center, which conducts research and analysis; develops and advocates for public policies and programs at the local, state, and federal levels of government to advance its mission. MAPC provides significant procurement services to its communities by conducting cooperative purchasing opportunities for its member communities for public safety vehicles and equipment, public works services, and school food.

MAPC's staff includes approximately 120 full-time employees located in downtown Boston in a transit-accessible and bike-friendly office. The agency operates on a hybrid schedule, combining time in the office with remote work. Employees must reside within a commutable distance from MAPC's Boston office. Additionally, MAPC serves as the legal fiduciary for the Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS), comprised of 60+ employees who are the staff to the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The MPO is responsible for conducting the federally required metropolitan transportation planning process for the Boston metropolitan area. CTPS is led by an Executive Director, who works in close collaboration with the MAPC Executive Director.

MAPC strongly supports the professional development of each and every staff person, believing their growth to be consistent with the best interests of MAPC and the region. It encourages its staff to develop new ideas to make MAPC's planning and policy work more relevant and impactful, and to adapt to changing times.

This is an opportunity to lead a dynamic, interdisciplinary, and innovative team of professionals who are committed to building a more sustainable, equitable, and collaborative future for everyone who lives and works in Greater Boston. For more information about MAPC or MetroCommon2050, please visit www.mapc.org.

Responsibilities (including but not limited to)

- Play a lead role in advancing MAPC's mission and strategic priorities in order to develop a more sustainable, equitable, and collaborative Greater Boston region;
- Ensure that MAPC staff have the capacity and resources to implement projects and policies that will achieve the goals of MetroCommon2050;
- Supervise a committed team of department heads in a wide array of topical areas, including land use, housing and economic development, transportation, environmental protection, municipal governance and collaboration, group procurement of goods and services, clean energy, public health, arts and culture, and more; work with these directors to implement a holistic approach to identifying and overcoming regional challenges through projects in individual municipalities and across municipal lines;
- In close collaboration with the Chief Financial Officer, ensure that MAPC's finances are managed in a prudent manner, with an emphasis on the long-term strength of the agency and the stability of the staff while encouraging stable and consistent growth;
- Actively engage in advancing public policy, programs, and funding to support MAPC's regional goals; serve as a listener, partner, advocate, and convener with a wide range of stakeholders, including state agencies, quasi-public entities, legislators, members of Congress, and local elected officials. Set a tone within the staff that encourages a culture of collaboration, innovation, risk-taking, learning, and mutual support; serve as a compassionate mentor to rising staff and managers across the agency;
- Recruit, and implement policies to retain the very best staff to serve the members and the region, with an emphasis on excellence and exceptionalism; ensure that MAPC's staff "reflects the region" and bring people into planning who have been marginalized in the past; actively support professional development, so all staff can grow in their fields and their service to the region;
- Support a data-driven approach to planning and policy development, including quantitative and qualitative research, analysis, and facilitating accessible data that is understandable and actionable throughout the region;

- Collaborate with the other 12 Regional Planning Agencies in Massachusetts, which, together with MAPC, comprise the Massachusetts Association of RPAs, especially on state policy, procurement of goods and services, and project delivery; also collaborate with the staff and members of the National Association of Regional Councils, their national trade association;
- Build external relationships with local elected and appointed officials, research partners, state agencies, community and faith-based organizations, business associations, and allied organizations and advocates; work in coalition with many other agencies, advocates, and trade associations who share a common cause with MAPC's mission; promote effective collaboration and teamwork, recognizing that working in coalition may present challenges, but remains essential to achieving collective goals;
- Working closely with the Communications team, serve as the lead communicator for MAPC in both social and conventional media, while also helping other staff to develop and use media skills in representing the agency; represent MAPC at conferences and public forums of all kinds, in Massachusetts and across the country, while also creating such opportunities for other staff; and
- Carry out such other executive and support functions as may be needed to ensure success in MAPC's mission and to advance the goals of MetroCommon2050.

Evening and weekend events, as well as local and out-of-state travel are a responsibility for this position. MAPC does not require you to have a vehicle; however, you must have a valid driver's license and/or the ability to arrange transportation to meetings in different parts of the region. MAPC provides support for travel, including MBTA passes, a Zipcar account, and BlueBikes membership.

Qualifications

Bachelor's degree required; alternatively, equivalent years of proven relevant professional experience may be considered in lieu of a degree. Master's or advanced degree preferred; AICP certification is a plus. Candidates should have at least 5 years in progressively more responsible senior leadership positions in local or regional planning, and at least 12 years of demonstrated experience leading an organization of at least 50 employees and supervising the work of others in a supportive and engaging manner. Understanding of municipal and metropolitan governance and planning practice is essential to this position. Must be bondable or currently bonded. Proven experience in contract negotiation is required. Candidates should have significant experience working with or within the Massachusetts public sector.

Successful candidates will demonstrate all or most of the following:

- Unwavering passion for and deep and diverse knowledge of land use, transportation, and environmental issues facing the Boston metropolitan region, or a comparable region, along with knowledge of relevant state and federal programs, and best practices for implementing positive change.
- Commitment to advancing equity in projects, programs, and policies across race, ethnicity, income, gender, and ability; desire to undo past policies and practices that have advanced segregation and inequity; commitment to developing a region that is collaborative, sustainable, climate-friendly, and supportive of artistic and cultural expression and preservation.
- Strong interpersonal and personnel-management skills, as demonstrated by past experience managing a diverse set of individuals on a wide range of projects or programs; an eagerness to mentor staff, to help them to advance their service to the people who live and work in the region, and to achieve professional goals.
- Outstanding leadership skills, including the ability to listen to others, to set an appropriate amount of process, and then to move forward with clear direction; the ability to set priorities, delegate and empower but monitor, and help a professional team to move forward with unified purpose; capacity to avoid distraction and maintain agency and regional focus.
- Experience managing a budget of at least \$15 million, with a wide variety of sources and uses, with a demonstrated capacity to maintain organizational stability even in the face of financial challenges.
- Proven experience securing and managing funding from diverse sources, including state and federal agencies, foundations, competitive grants, and creative partnerships with other organizations; ability to align fundraising efforts with strategic priorities and to build long-term financial sustainability.
- Effective collaboration with a wide range of partners including traditional stakeholders and unconventional or cross-sector allies with a willingness to build and sustain creative, inclusive, and strategic partnerships.

- A clear understanding of how municipal government works, including its strengths and weaknesses; demonstrated ability to work closely with elected and appointed local officials and staff; and the ability to encourage collaboration across municipal lines.
- Excellent writing and public speaking skills; ability to engage a wide range of audiences; the ability not only to listen, but also to hear; ability both to convince and to be flexible, when appropriate; and the ability to achieve consensus on difficult public issues.
- Strong desire to innovate and find new ways to address existing and emerging challenges; familiarity with outside forces and how those may impact the future of the region.
- The ability to make decisions, exercise judgment, and interface effectively with all levels of individuals, ranging from the Governor to staff members, funders, and constituents.
- The ability to implement organizational change management coupled with the ability to plan for and scale up an organization through growth.
- Be able to effectively balance the need for an organization to be brought up to standard to effectively operate under the current structure, while continuing to grow and evolve the organization to move toward the future.
- The ability to remain calm, be a steadying influence to others, and remain unflappable when faced with difficult and uncertain situations.

Compensation and Benefits

The salary ranges from **\$230,000 - \$255,000** per year, depending on qualifications and experience. This is a full-time exempt position. MAPC offers excellent Massachusetts state employee benefits, including retirement and health benefits, as well as a flexible, supportive, and family-friendly work environment, and continued professional development. This position offers 5 weeks of vacation time (accrued annually), plus holidays and discretionary time. The total compensation package features an outstanding set of employee benefits which you should consider towards your overall compensation, including:

- 75% MAPC paid medical insurance premium
- Reasonable Dental and Vision Plans
- Flexible Spending Account for Health Care and Dependent Care
- Public transit commuter subsidy up to \$225
- Low cost basic and optional life insurance
- Retirement Savings plans: Defined Benefit Pension plan through Mass. State Employees Retirement System (MESRB) and a Deferred Compensation 457(b) plan
- 13 paid holidays per year and competitive Sick and Vacation Time
- Up to 5 Discretionary days per year (based on hire date)
- 40 MAPC-paid days for FMLA qualifying events, including parental leave
- Tuition assistance
- 100% Short-Term Disability and optional Long Term Disability coverage
- Mass4You Wellness Programs and Employee Assistance Program
- Professional Development
- Payment of professional dues and memberships
- On site drop-in yoga, lactation room, and work well fitness challenges
- Mass State employee cell phone data and equipment discounts
- Qualified Employer for Public Service Student Loan Forgiveness Program

How to Apply

The position is open until filled, and applications are reviewed on a rolling basis. Interested candidates should submit a cover letter and resume to matt.mcsweeney@roberthalf.com. Candidates selected to interview will be asked to submit three (3) references plus a sample of relevant writing or work product. Candidates must have legal authorization to work in the USA and a valid driver's license and/or the ability to arrange transportation to meetings in different parts of the region. MAPC participates in E-Verify, which is a federal program that helps us to determine work eligibility in the United States. A Criminal Offenders Records Information (CORI) request must be completed if offered this position. However, a

criminal record is not an automatic bar to employment but will be reviewed in relation to the job applied for. MAPC participates in E-Verify, which is a federal program that helps us to determine work eligibility in the United States.

MAPC is an Equal Opportunity Employer. It believes that a staff with a range of perspectives, experiences, and skillsets strengthens its work. It is committed to building a more equitable workplace that allows staff with diverse backgrounds and identities to thrive, grow, and lead. For more information on MAPC's culture of equity, see their [Equity at MAPC](#) page.

Employer

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Website

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