# Strategic Foresight & Systems Designer—Public Sector

**SALARY RANGE (2018):** $70,000–$90,000

Imagine being able to devise plausible scenarios for the future and use that knowledge to influence the future you want for your organization, your industry and even your country. Strategic foresight is a model and process that helps identify future scenarios and their potential impacts going forward. By combining my expertise in strategic foresight and my skills in systems thinking, design and mapping, I am able to integrate systems thinking and human-centered design to develop and analyze scenarios. I have a unique combination of skills that I have deliberately honed over the past few years. This combination of foresight and systems thinking, design and mapping is increasingly in demand. They are tools that can be used to assess what is happening, what is possible and what is reasonable in terms of developing strategies and interventions that address complex social issues.

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**The Tip:** Remember one can't safely drive a car using only the rearview mirror. In an environment that feels like it is moving at warp speed, it's important to look out for what may be ahead. Watch how other trendsetters do things. Learn from their mistakes and implement your own ideas to make change happen. Find the influencers in each group you work with and get them onside before you implement changes.

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**PRIORITY KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS**:

**Systems Thinking**
Knowledge & ability to:
- Understand systems thinking
- Analyze and map systems
- Identify and make plans for future trends
- Thrive in ambiguity and manage complexity
- Recognize trends, opportunities and underlying patterns

**Human-Centered Design & Design Thinking**
Knowledge & ability to:
- Apply human-centered design principles to solve problems
- Think laterally
- Identify patterns
- Work with third-party groups, such as think tanks, labs and accelerators
- Ability to formulate research questions
- Conduct secondary, qualitative and/or

**Communication, Collaboration & Facilitation**
Knowledge & ability to:
- Use contextual knowledge
- Communicate effectively in all formats
- Design and facilitate collective impact initiatives
- Cultivate new collaborations and partnerships across sectors
- Use technology and specialized collaboration tools
- Compelling presentation & report writing skills

**Changemaking**
Knowledge & ability to:
- Be authentic, empathetic and ethical
- Ask questions
- Embrace challenges as opportunities to create systemic change

**Oversight & Knowledge Management**
Knowledge & ability to:
- Develop and manage the planning process
- Direct coordination of activities across departments, stakeholders, clients & users
- Leverage stakeholder relationships
- Develop and implement program schedules
- Budget management & oversight
- Evaluate social, financial and collective impact
- Manage and analyze complex data

**Core Transferable Skills**
Be an expert at all core transferable skills:
- Thinking skills
- Communications skills
- Organizational skills
- Interpersonal skills

| quantitative research | • Demonstrate long-term social impact and sustainability | • Technical literacy |
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| • Synthesize key issues | • Break down silos and leverage relationships | |
| | • Engage a changemaker mindset | |

## BUILDING BLOCK EXPERIENCES:

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| **Education & Learning:**<br>• Bachelor of Arts (Information Design)<br>• Graduate Certificate in Strategic Foresight and Innovation<br>• Part-time instructor on digital design and have taken numerous workshops and webinars on environmental topics, urban planning and design thinking | Spending time in Info Design really helped me to develop my creative skills. I never thought of forecasting as very creative, but my education has allowed me to leverage this talent while at the same time take advantage of my ability to think clearly and logically. |
| **Employment Experiences**:<br>• My first job during the summer in high school was providing customer service at the landfill, explaining how the area worked as people dropped off their waste. I wanted to see how the existing system worked.<br>• Before going to university, I worked with the local recycling company on a marketing campaign. I noticed that convenience was a major issue.<br>• During university, I worked for a company that collected food waste for composting<br>• Upon graduation, I worked for the city on a student grant, helping them to create a sustainable recycling network, which included working with departments ranging from roads to safety to graphic design | The owner of the composting company really liked the press he got from collecting leftover restaurant food for the food bank. So, we brainstormed other social impact strategies to attract additional customers. He hired a person with development delays to help the driver collect food waste. I wrote a story and sent it off to as many publications as I could find. Within three months our customer base grew into a new neighbourhood.<br><br>When I worked at the city, I got to interact with a wide variety of people. My colleague's spouse heard about how I was connecting with different departments and she got me an interview with a social services umbrella organization that wanted to hire someone to align, share, and maximize the available resources between their agencies. I got the job and they assigned a mentor to me to help me learn about the organization quickly. That's now a tactic I use at every new job. Find someone who knows how the organization works before you start proposing changes. |
| **Community Experiences:**<br>• In elementary school, we campaigned to stop the removal of some trees from our playground<br><br><br>• In junior high school, I started a campaign to install a grey water system to improve water conversation in my community | People experiencing homelessness were taking shelter in the trees beside our elementary school playground and the city wanted to remove the trees. I convinced my Grade 6 teacher to let us brainstorm alternative methods to support these individuals, so they would leave our small stand of trees and bushes.<br>The campaign for a grey water system taught me to research deeply so I could clearly explain |

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| • In high school, I started a campaign for compost recycling | in a convincing manner why the change was good for everyone.<br>The recycling campaign taught me about connecting with existing community partners to connect with existing systems. It made things much easier than starting from scratch. |
| • I volunteer at the community food bank, connecting with restaurants who have extra food that used to go into compost and was able to divert it to the food bank | Connecting the customers from the composting business with the food bank generated a great news story, which doubled our compost customers who believed in what we were trying to accomplish. It also put us on the radar of the city bylaw officer and so I learned about health and safety guidelines. |
| **Contextual Experiences:**<br>• I love making improvements to spaces, systems and skillsets. The more experience I gained in the world, the more I realized I was unusual because most people want to leave well enough alone. | Fairly early on I realized that just because I was good at arguing and I knew I was right about many social injustices, arguing does not make people change their behaviours. My driving force focused around understanding how to get people to take a different action. |
| **Relationships:**<br>• Many of my friends are activists. I support them and try to implement systemic changes on multiple levels, so they don't have to take such big risks.<br>• I belonged to the environment club at university | I went to an alumni event for the university I attended and reconnected with a friend who got me hooked on human-centered design. It was something I had been brewing in my mind but did not have a label for. It is essential for crafting successful proposal changes to systems, policies, procedures and guidelines. |