

C A R E E R O P P O R T U N I T Y



PLANNING & BUILDING DIRECTOR

TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY, CALIFORNIA

ANNUAL SALARY: \$180,353–\$235,519 DOE/DOQ

THE TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY, CALIFORNIA, IS SEEKING A KNOWLEDGEABLE, HANDS-ON, AND RESULTS-ORIENTED PLANNING AND BUILDING DIRECTOR to provide strategic, supervisory, administrative, and technical oversight of the Planning and Building Department. This leadership role offers a unique opportunity to shape the Town's physical and regulatory environment, while advancing high-priority initiatives in a service-oriented municipality. The Director will oversee a dedicated team of three staff members, plus external consultants, and manage an approximately \$2 million operating budget. Key priorities include modernizing systems and processes, enhancing departmental efficiency, implementing housing and land use initiatives, and strengthening customer service. This position is ideal for a community-focused leader who values innovation, community relations, and collaboration in a small, high-impact municipal setting. ***Advance thoughtful development in one of California's most civic and scenic communities, apply today!***




THE COMMUNITY & REGION/TOWN GOVERNMENT

THE TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY, CALIFORNIA, is a serene and picturesque small town nestled in the scenic foothills of the Santa Cruz Mountains, just minutes from Silicon Valley's innovation hubs. With approximately 4,200 residents, the Town offers an unparalleled blend of natural beauty, collective know-how, and resources. Rolling hills, lush redwood forests, oak woodlands and miles of trails make it a haven for outdoor enthusiasts who enjoy hiking, biking, horseback riding, and stargazing. The Town's commitment to preserving its rural character is evident in its low-density housing, expansive open spaces, and a network of well-maintained parks. This tranquil environment provides a peaceful retreat from the hustle and bustle of nearby urban areas. In addition to its natural allure, the Town boasts a strong sense of community and high quality of life with top-rated schools, a vibrant local culture, and a range of events that foster a welcoming atmosphere. Residents also benefit from convenient access to nearby Silicon Valley and the San Francisco Bay Area.

Planning in the Town of Portola Valley is truly distinctive. With the Town's setting feeling more like a community nestled within a vast natural preserve, planning efforts must carefully balance development with environmental stewardship and the preservation of the rural landscape. While the Town's development code presents some complexities, it also presents a meaningful opportunity: civic leaders and residents alike are energized around the prospect of modernizing planning policies to better reflect current values, sustainability goals, and community priorities. This creates momentum for a planning leader to make a lasting impact through visionary, collaborative work alongside a deeply engaged and thoughtful community committed to preserving what makes Portola Valley so special.

CLICK TO  PLAY VIDEO

WATCH: WHAT MAKES PORTOLA VALLEY SPECIAL



Portola Valley
At 60

The Town of Portola Valley operates with a Council/ Manager form of government. A five-member elected Town Council, with a rotating Mayor, sets policies and works with volunteer commissions to ensure Town services align with community needs and goals. The Town has a total staff of 12 and an approximate budget of \$8 million.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE TOWN

READ ABOUT THE OFFICE OF THE TOWN MANAGER

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THE DEPARTMENT

THE PLANNING & BUILDING DEPARTMENT MANAGES LAND USE, development, construction, permitting, inspections, and code enforcement to ensure projects are safe, compliant, and aligned with Portola Valley's rural character. It also supports housing initiatives and provides virtual services and extensive resources to guide applicants through the development process. A key responsibility of the department is implementing the Portola Valley General Plan, the Town's long-range blueprint for growth, conservation, and community well-being. It includes seven state-mandated elements—Land Use, Transportation, Open Space, Conservation, Housing, Noise, and Safety—as well as locally tailored elements such as Sustainability, Recreation, Historic Resources, Trails & Paths, and Scenic Roads & Highways. Together, the department and General Plan guide thoughtful, sustainable development while preserving the natural and community character of Portola Valley.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT](#)

[READ THE TOWN'S GENERAL PLAN](#)



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THE JOB

REPORTING TO THE TOWN MANAGER, THE PLANNING AND BUILDING DIRECTOR serves as a key member of the Town's executive leadership team, providing strategic, supervisory, administrative, and technical oversight of the Planning and Building Department. The Director manages a team of three staff—a Senior Permit Technician, Associate Planner, and part-time Administrative Assistant—and oversees the work of multiple consultants. The role includes responsibility for a departmental operating budget of approximately \$2 million. Key areas of focus include long-range planning, design review, entitlement processing, policy development, and code enforcement. The Director also serves as the primary liaison to the Planning Commission and the Architecture & Site Control Commission (ASCC), and will deliver high-level customer service through direct public engagement, including at the front counter and in addressing inquiries related to permitting and consultant coordination. The Director is expected to take full ownership of departmental direction, support the Town's ongoing development efforts, and build strong working relationships with residents, consulting professionals, and elected officials.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE IS A STRATEGIC AND SERVICE-ORIENTED LEADER with comprehensive knowledge of California planning and housing law, and a demonstrated commitment to delivering high-quality, responsive public service. This individual brings a balanced leadership style that combines policy expertise with operational engagement and thrives in a small, community-focused municipal setting. The successful candidate exhibits exceptional interpersonal skills and political acumen, building trusted relationships with the Town Council, staff, and community stakeholders, while setting and managing realistic expectations. They are expected to be highly visible and accessible—regularly engaging at the public counter, conducting site visits, and addressing inquiries through direct, in-person communication. The role requires proven experience in municipal planning, permitting, and housing elements, as well as expertise in supervising staff, managing consultants, overseeing contracts, and preparing RFPs and proposals. The Director must possess the ability to lead with professionalism, emotional intelligence, resilience, and discretion in high-touch and high-pressure environments. This position calls for a hands-on, collaborative, results-driven professional who excels at project and consultant management and is deeply committed to advancing the Town’s planning and development goals with integrity, transparency, and service excellence.



The ideal candidate will demonstrate the following core competencies:

Results Orientation:

Demonstrates a proactive, solution-focused approach to advancing projects, meeting community expectations, and improving departmental performance.

External Public Awareness:

Understands community needs, political dynamics, and state housing mandates to effectively align planning initiatives with external expectations.

Relationship Building:

Establishes trust and collaboration with staff, elected officials, consultants, and the public to support effective planning and service delivery.

Composure:

Maintains professionalism, sound judgment, and poise when navigating complex, high-pressure situations or responding to public concerns.



MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Any combination of education, training and experience which provides the required knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform the essential functions of the job, such as:

Education. Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with major course work in land-use planning, urban planning, architecture, landscape architecture, or a closely related field.

Experience. Five (5) years progressively responsible experience in municipal planning with at least two (2) years in a supervisory capacity or any equivalent combination of education and experience, additional education substituting on a year-for-year basis for the required experience.

DESIRED

Master's degree and/or AICP certification are desirable.

UPCOMING PROJECTS & OPPORTUNITIES

DIGITAL PERMITTING SYSTEM. Complete the implementation of the Town's digital permitting platform, ensuring full integration, staff training, and improved efficiency in application processing, payment tracking, and document management.

DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES & PROCEDURES. In alignment with Town leadership priorities, strengthen customer service, enhance operational efficiency, and ensure consistency in service delivery through the development and formalization of internal policies, procedures, and performance standards.

SAFETY ELEMENT UPDATE. Guide the update of the Town's Safety Element, coordinating with multiple stakeholders to align with state mandates and local hazard mitigation efforts.

HOUSING ELEMENT. Oversee the implementation of recently recertified Housing Element programs, including permitting, entitlement, and compliance for designated housing sites, in coordination with community groups and state agencies.

ADU PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT. Expand and facilitate new accessory dwelling unit opportunities by refining design standards, zoning code regulations, and new inclusionary housing requirements for multi-family projects.

USER FEE STUDY. Assist a comprehensive fee study aimed at achieving near-total cost recovery for planning and building services.

DEVELOPMENT SITE. Lead the rezoning, planning, and entitlement of designated new housing sites, including a potential mixed-use development with retail and residential components, other potential new housing developments.

SALARY & BENEFITS

An annual salary of **\$180,353–\$235,519 DOE/DOQ, PLUS** a generous benefits package that includes:

Retirement: The Town participates in CalPERS with a 2% @ 55 for classic members with a current employee contribution of 7%. For new employees covered under PEPR, the retirement formula is 2% at 62 with an employee contribution of half the normal cost of benefit for both employer and employee; the Town participates in Social Security.

Health Insurance: Medical Insurance/Flexible Dollar Amount: Generous contribution to Cafeteria Plan (section 125) for employee to select from CalPERS medical plans, opt out, or deferred compensation plan.

Vision Insurance: Town-paid for employee and dependents.

Dental Insurance: Town-paid for employee and dependents.

Vacation Leave: 10 to 20 days per year, depending on years of service.

Sick Leave: 12 days accrued per year (8 hours per month).

Paid Holidays: Nine holidays per calendar year, plus the business days between Christmas and New Year's Day.

Administrative/Management Leave: 56 hours/yr.; pro-rated based on start date.

457 Defined Contribution Plan: 457 plans with no Town contributions.

Life Insurance: Town-paid \$50,000 policy for Eligible Employees.

Long Term Disability: Town-paid for Eligible Employees.

Tuition Reimbursement: Up to \$3,000 per fiscal year, after one year of service.

Automobile Allowance: Monthly allowance of \$250.

Work Schedule: Option for 9/80 or limited hybrid work schedule after three months.

HOW *to* APPLY

For first consideration, apply by **SEPTEMBER 12** at:

WBCP JOB BOARD



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SECURE THE DATES. Round one virtual interviews will take place on **OCTOBER 10**. Finalists will move forward to round two in-person interviews that will take place on **OCTOBER 17**. *Selected candidates must be available for both days.*

QUESTIONS? Please contact your recruiter, **Levi Kuhlman**, with any questions:
866.929.WBCP (9227) toll-free
541.664.0376 direct
levi@wbcpinc.com



The Town of Portola Valley is an Equal Opportunity Employer.