

This recruitment is managed by



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



PRINCIPAL ENGINEER

CITY OF WATSONVILLE, CALIFORNIA

ANNUAL SALARY:

\$130,161–\$174,428.28

DOE/DOQ*

*COLA increase anticipated
in July 2026

**Competitive Sign-On Bonus
of Up to \$20,000!**

THE CITY OF WATSONVILLE IS SEEKING A SEASONED, solutions-driven **Principal Engineer** to lead development review and land use engineering. You will guide private applications, from commercial and industrial to mixed-use and residential, through entitlement, planning permits, tentative/final maps and subdivision improvements in close partnership with Community Development. The Principal Engineer is embedded in development services; you will ensure projects meet City standards, stormwater/NPDES-LID requirements, and applicable California laws (Subdivision Map Act, CEQA interfaces), while overseeing city staff and on-call plan-check consultants. The role sets and applies infrastructure standards; negotiates conditions of approval, improvement agreements, easements and right-of-way dedications; and coordinates with Caltrans, PG&E, Santa Cruz County, and regional partners. The position supervises staff and consultants and collaborates with the City's CIP (approximately \$65 million) where private improvements interface with public facilities. **Lead development, elevate standards, and serve a city that values your expertise, apply today!**

***This recruitment may be used to fill other positions within the Public Works Department. Qualified candidates are strongly encouraged to apply for consideration even if their experience aligns with multiple focus areas. ***

THE COMMUNITY

WATSONVILLE, CA, IS A VIBRANT COASTAL CITY that blends agricultural heritage with small-town charm. With an approximate population of 52,600 and spanning just under seven square miles, Watsonville maintains a strong sense of community while providing access to a wealth of outdoor activities. Residents and visitors can enjoy birdwatching at Elkhorn Slough, fishing at Pinto Lake, beach outings at nearby Sunset State Beach, and community festivities like the annual Strawberry Festival. Located along the scenic Monterey Bay, the city is within close proximity to major destinations—just 20 miles from Santa Cruz, 40 miles from Monterey, and about 90 miles from San Francisco—offering the perfect balance of coastal tranquility and urban convenience. Watsonville’s top industries include agriculture, food processing, manufacturing, and logistics, with major employers such as Driscoll’s anchoring the local economy. As part of the renowned Santa Cruz Mountains wine region, the area boasts award-winning wineries and a thriving culinary scene that enhances its charm, making Watsonville an increasingly desirable place to live, work, and explore for both families and professionals.



THE ORGANIZATION

THE CITY OF WATSONVILLE IS GOVERNED BY A SEVEN-MEMBER CITY COUNCIL, which serves as the legislative and policy-making body for the community. The Council appoints a City Manager who is responsible for overseeing the city’s daily operations and ensuring that municipal services are delivered effectively and efficiently. With 400 full-time staff and an approximate FY 2025 budget of \$278 million and a CIP budget of \$111 million, the City strives to work with their community to create positive impact through service with heart.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT THE CITY](#)



THE DEPARTMENT

THE PUBLIC WORKS & UTILITIES DEPARTMENT

is the largest department within the City and plays a vital role in maintaining the city's infrastructure and delivering essential daily services to residents. It is responsible for operating and maintaining the city's regional potable water system, sanitary and storm sewer systems, wastewater treatment and water recycling plant, and managing solid waste and recycling collection through both curbside services and the Harvest Drive Drop-Off Center. The Department ensures full compliance with environmental and regulatory requirements while advancing the city's sustainability goals. It values creative problem-solving, collaboration, and maintains a supportive workplace culture where individuals are encouraged to lead and innovate.

**LEARN MORE ABOUT
THE DEPARTMENT**

CLICK BUTTON



THE DIVISION

THE ENGINEERING DIVISION PROVIDES ESSENTIAL MANAGEMENT

and technical support for all public infrastructure systems in the city. It plays a critical role in the design and construction management of the **City's Capital Improvement Program**, which includes upgrades and maintenance of streets, traffic systems, parking, storm drains, wastewater, solid waste, and water facilities. A major function of the Division is administering Watsonville's Pavement Management Program (PMP) to plan and implement road maintenance projects. It also manages public works construction bids and proposals, overseeing the planning and execution of new construction, facility upgrades, traffic signal systems, and utility improvements.

CLICK
LINK

**LEARN MORE ABOUT
THE DIVISION**

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THE JOB

REPORTING TO THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS & UTILITIES or

designate, the Principal Engineer is a key member of the City team for land use and development review. You help guide private projects across residential, commercial, industrial, and mixed-use categories from early concept through entitlement and construction. Working side by side with Community Development, you coordinate Public Works' role in the process, set clear conditions of approval, and make sure improvements and utilities tie into the City's systems safely and efficiently. This Principal Engineer will review subdivision maps and improvement plans, confirm compliance with the City's permits and low impact development stormwater requirements, assess fees and ensure applications meet the California Subdivision Map Act and local codes. The role manages consultant plan check, easements and right-of-way dedications or abandonments, and the recordation and acceptance steps that close out a project.

Much of the work is collaborative. You will be the day-to-day liaison with developers and design professionals, Utilities and Traffic Engineering, and outside partners such as Caltrans, PG&E, and Santa Cruz County. You will coordinate encroachments and permits, align frontage and utility work with City master plans and the capital program, and recommend updates to standards and fees when practice or law changes. Success in this role looks like predictable, timely reviews, clear communication, and constructive problem solving that protects the public interest while helping good projects move forward.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE IS A WELL-ROUNDED civil engineering professional with a passion for public service and community infrastructure. They possess strong technical expertise in land use development along with a deep understanding of municipal ordinances and permitting processes. As an independent and strategic thinker, they demonstrate sound judgment in managing complex projects, from planning through execution, while effectively overseeing budgets and allocating resources. With a collaborative and diplomatic approach to leadership, they will foster strong working relationships across departments and with regional partners to advance shared objectives and secure funding. They possess excellent communication, leadership, and organizational skills, and are adept at managing expectations, navigating complex development challenges, and representing the City in both technical and public forums. The ideal candidate will thrive in a high-performing, team-oriented environment that values initiative, trust, and shared success.

The ideal candidate will also demonstrate the following core competencies...

Technical Expertise: Applies advanced knowledge of civil engineering principles, land use development, and public infrastructure to ensure code compliance and high-quality project delivery.

Relationship Building: Establishes and maintains strong partnerships with internal departments, external agencies, and community stakeholders to support coordinated, goal-driven outcomes.

Organizing & Planning: Effectively manages complex projects and resources, aligning tasks with strategic priorities and ensuring timely, cost-effective execution.

High Standards: Demonstrates integrity, accountability, and attention to detail in all aspects of work, upholding professional and regulatory standards across engineering functions.



MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Any combination of training and experience that would provide the required knowledge, skills, and abilities is qualifying. A typical way to obtain the required qualifications would be:

EDUCATION: Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering or a related field.

EXPERIENCE: Eight (8) years of increasingly responsible professional engineering experience in the design and construction of municipal public works projects, including at least two years in a management or supervisory capacity.

LICENSE/CERTIFICATION:

Professional Engineer (PE): Possession and maintenance of a valid Certificate of Registration as a professional Civil Engineer in the State of California. If licensed in another state, the Principal Engineer must have the ability to obtain registration as a professional Civil Engineer within the State of California within 12 months of employment.





SALARY & BENEFITS

The annual salary is **\$130,161–\$174,428.28 DOE/DOQ** with a **COLA increase anticipated in July 2026, PLUS** a generous benefits package:

Health Insurance: Generous health, dental and vision insurance.

Vacation: Annual accrual of up to 22 days per year depending on length of service.

Administrative Leave: 108 hours per year.

Holidays: 14 holidays per year including one floating holiday.

Deferred Compensation: \$50 match per pay period.

Sick Leave: 15 days per year.

Retirement: The City participates in the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS) under a 2% @ 60 formula for Classic Members (employee pays 7%). A 2% @ 62 formula applies to New/PEPRA Members (employee pays 6.25%). City Management employees also participate in Social Security at 7.65%.

Hybrid & Flexible Work Schedules Available!

HOW TO APPLY

Qualified candidates will be interviewed as they are identified.

For first consideration, APPLY IMMEDIATELY at:

WBCP JOB BOARD

QUESTIONS?

Please contact your recruiter, Levi Kuhlman, with any inquiries:

866.929.WBCP (9227) toll free

541.664.0376 direct

levi@wbcpinc.com

