



# City of Olympia

## Community Planning & Economic Development Director



## Welcome to Olympia

As the capital city of Washington State, Olympia is in a culturally and historically significant and scenic setting at the southernmost point of Puget Sound. The Olympia community is routinely recognized for its outstanding quality of life, vibrant downtown, and family-friendly amenities. Community members enjoy a robust economy, convenient transit, high-quality schools, low crime rates, and varied opportunities for civic and community involvement.

Olympia boasts unparalleled access to the natural environment within an urban setting. The community is walkable and pedestrian friendly with well-established bike and hiking trails, close to 1,500 acres of public park lands, miles of public freshwater and saltwater shorelines, and stunning views of Mt. Rainier and the Olympia Mountain Range.

Olympia's vibrant and historic downtown serves as the entertainment, arts, and cultural hub for Thurston County and beyond. Spanning .5 square miles, Olympia's downtown includes over 450 independently owned businesses and over 1,900 residents. The Creative District is a 30-block area that is home to over 150 creative enterprises such as theaters, galleries, breweries, and industrial designers. The Farmers Market, State Capitol Campus, Hands On Children's Museum and 8 public parks are the main attractions for both Olympians and tourists.

Percival Landing – one of Olympia's three waterfront parks – lies in the heart of downtown. With a mile-long boardwalk, the Landing is a hub for boaters, pedestrians, summer festivals, and the farmers market. Nearby Capitol Lake provides a popular 1.7 mile loop for walking, running, or birdwatching.

Olympia's ideal location along the I-5 corridor puts residents within reach of Seattle, Portland, British Columbia, the waters of Puget Sound and the Pacific Ocean, and the Olympia and Cascade Mountain Ranges. Seattle-Tacoma International Airport serves the region and is 45 miles to the north.

# The City of Olympia

Incorporated in 1859, the City of Olympia operates under a Council-Manager form of government. The seven members on Olympia's City Council are elected at-large to staggered four- year terms during general elections held in odd-numbered years. Position 1 is designated as the Mayor's position. The Mayor and Councilmembers have equal voting authority, with the Mayor voting on all issues as one of seven Councilmembers.

Serving a population of 56,900, the City operates with an annual budget of \$284 million and a team of 673 FTEs. Olympia provides a full range of municipal services including public safety (police, fire, and court), streets, parks and recreation, arts, utilities, community planning and development, zoning, and general administrative services.

Olympia's City Manager is committed to a "First Team" culture, where we put the interest of the City above our own department or function because we are committed to each other's success. This has been adopted and embraced throughout the organization. The organizational culture places a high value on teamwork, listening, accountability, and meaningful impact in serving the public.

## The Community Planning & Economic Development Department

Reporting to the City Manager and serving on the Executive Leadership Team, the Director of Community Planning & Economic Development oversees Current and Long-Range Planning, the Building Official, Permitting, Code Enforcement, Economic Development, Historic Preservation, Urban Forestry and Housing & Homeless Response. The Director is responsible for a budget of \$19.4 million and 54 employees.





## Community Planning & Economic Development Director | About the Position

### The Ideal Candidate

- A visionary, inspirational and strategic leader who can advance Olympia's shared Comprehensive Plan vision of a growing and welcoming community that promotes livable and affordable neighborhoods, while preserving and promoting the unique culture, art, and historic assets that help to define Olympia.
- A proven track record in developing and implementing strategic plans, with a focus on using performance measures to guide decision-making.
- Experience in building and fostering authentic relationships across Departments and different work groups within the City in addition to building and maintaining community and regional partnerships.
- Demonstrates knowledge in the complexities of addressing housing and homelessness and understands the role and impact of government in developing and implementing short-term and long-term solutions.
- Extensive knowledge of planning and development policies, land use practices, laws, and ordinances; including experience with permitting processes and delivery systems.
- Knowledge of economic development trends, challenges and opportunities, with an emphasis on strengthening small businesses and retaining and expanding major employers and enhance economic pathways for all community members.
- Outstanding communication skills and is an empathetic and skilled listener with a proven reputation for being accessible, responsive, honest, and transparent.
- Experience managing complex budgets that include multiple funding sources.



## Community Planning & Economic Development Director | About the Position

### Areas of Experience and Demonstrated Success

#### **Leveraging Regional and Community Partnerships**

Ability to develop and maintain collaborative, respectful, and productive relationships with other governmental agencies, jurisdictions, non-profits, community and business leaders, the state legislature, tribes and stakeholders and partners to advance the work of the City. Embraces community-driven and inclusive engagement to inform priorities and address complex community challenges.

#### **Courageous and Empathic Leadership**

A visionary, innovative, and strategic leader who forecasts needs based on the dynamic and emerging needs and priorities of the community. Emphasizes fostering and strengthening relationships amongst team members and with other departments. A genuine interest in people and can look beyond traditional strategies to develop and cultivate the workforce. Has outstanding communication skills and is an empathetic and skilled listener with a proven reputation for being accessible, responsive, honest, and transparent. An ability to stay courageous in the midst of complex organizational challenges and decision making.

#### **Creating Thriving Workplace Cultures**

Prioritizes working with employees to imagine, create, and implement programs that nurture a healthy, innovative, and fun culture where all employees feel like they belong and have the resources they need to do their jobs safely and effectively. An ability to embrace a “First Team” culture, where one can put the interest of the City above their own departments or functions.

#### **Promoter of Work/Life Balance**

Leads by example in promoting a healthy work-life balance for all staff and recognizes the benefits of flexible, teleworking or hybrid work schedules.

#### **Champion of Social Justice, Equity and Belonging**

Demonstrated commitment to advancing social justice, equity, and belonging in the community and within the workforce. Understands the value of community engagement in uncovering and developing strategies to avoid or mitigate inequitable outcomes.



## Community Planning & Economic Development Director | About the Position

### Challenges and Opportunities

#### 1. Comprehensive Plan.

Olympia is currently reviewing and updating its Comprehensive Plan to reflect how the community will accommodate new population and employment growth, and development through 2045. The successful candidate will support the final adoption and implementation of the Plan, with an emphasis on the resulting development, review, and adoption of new or revised regulations, continuing engagement with the community, and the fostering of partnerships to support achieving plan goals. To learn more about the process underway visit <https://engage.olympiawa.gov/olympia2045>.

#### 2. Affordable Housing & Homelessness.

Housing and homelessness are a top priority for the City of Olympia; addressing it calls for urgency, flexibility, strong City and regional partnerships, and a desire to seek evidence-based and innovative solutions. Solutions may include adapting development regulations, reducing financial barriers for low-income developers, seeking out new and creative partnerships, and pursuing and leveraging state and federal funding.

#### 3. Land Use Planning, Permitting & Development.

Olympia is seeking a leader who will ensure the City's zoning and land use policies, regulations and processes are being continuously improved to make them more understandable and easier to navigate for applicants. This means demonstrating a strong commitment to ongoing customer, employee and community engagement, process improvement, and data-driven policy and decision-making.

#### 4. Olympia Strong.

Olympia Strong is the City's framework for identifying roles and priorities for creating and maintaining economic opportunity for all community members. Olympia is seeking a leader who can guide successful implementation of Olympia Strong in collaboration with other Community Planning & Economic Development divisions, City departments, and broad range of community partners.



## Community Planning & Economic Development Director | About the Position

### Education & Experience

- Eight to ten years of progressively responsible leadership experience. Strong experience in managing and communicating about complex issues with high community visibility and interest, long range and strategic planning, providing support to boards and commissions and elected officials, land use planning and permitting, and ensuring compliance with City codes, plans, and state and federal regulations.
- Bachelor's degree from an accredited four-year college or university in Public Administration, Urban Planning, Business Administration or other related field. A master's degree and American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) certification is desired but not required.

### Compensation & Benefits

The annual salary range for this position is \$149,472 to \$224,208. The starting salary will be based on a combination of experience, education, skills and abilities.

The City offers a competitive benefit package including health, vision, and dental insurance, as well as vacation and sick leave. The City participates in the State of Washington Public Employees Retirement System (PERS).



## Resources

### One Community Plan

*click to learn more*

### Olympia Strong

*click to learn more*

### City Comprehensive Plan

*click to learn more*

### Housing Action Plan

*click to learn more*



## Application Process

Persons interested in this position should submit the following information:

- ❶ A cover letter describing your interest in and qualifications for the position.
- ❷ A current resume

If you have questions regarding this announcement, please call Marissa Karras at 360.956.1336. This position will remain open until filled but the screening process will move quickly. In order to be considered for the first round of interviews please submit your application materials at <http://www.karrasconsulting.net> no later than January 17, 2025.



*The City is an equal opportunity employer and is strongly committed to enhancing the diversity of its workforce. We will provide assistance in the recruitment, application and selection process to applicants with disabilities who request such assistance.*