



City of

HIGHLAND

California

invites your interest in the position of

Community Development Director



Recruitment Services Provided by
Ralph Andersen & Associates



The Opportunity!

The City of Highland is conducting a statewide search for an experienced urban planning professional to serve as their next Director of Community Development. The ideal candidate will be a collaborative and solution-oriented member of the City's executive team. The ideal candidate will have a demonstrated deep and effective understanding of urban and suburban environments, economic development strategies, and outstanding communication skills. The previous Director announced his retirement after 28 years with the City and half of that time serving in the role of Director, which created this unique opportunity for an energetic, forward-thinking professional to lead and manage in a collaborative environment.

The Community

The City of Highland, incorporated in 1987, is a vibrant and progressive general law city operating under a Council-Manager form of government. Nestled at the base of the scenic San Bernardino National Forest in the Inland Empire, Highland serves a diverse community of over 56,000 residents across 18.6 square miles. Rooted in a historic citrus heritage dating back to 1891, the city seamlessly blends rich historical preservation with modern residential developments, excellent schools, and a safe, family-oriented atmosphere.

When the Santa Fe Railroad put in a depot at Palm Avenue and Pacific Street in 1891, the area became firmly entrenched as the town's center and its buildings and houses remain largely intact today. The original town site has been called one of the best-preserved examples of a citrus town in California.

Highland became a well-known citrus region and remained so until the 1930's when the railroad ceased operation and the citrus industry was hit by a recession. The citrus industry never fully recovered in the area, and the community grew slowly over the next 20-30 years.

The next big change came in the early 1980's when Mobil Oil's master planned community of East Highlands Ranch began construction. East Highlands Ranch contains more than 1,760 acres with an eventual dwelling built out of 2,760 units. Many areas outside of East Highlands Ranch have housing options offering opportunities for the first-time home buyer to the upscale buyer. The rural atmosphere and proximity to the mountains have made Highland an attractive location in which to live.





Governing Structure

Highland is a general law City and operates under the council-manager form of government. The City Council consists of five members. The Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem are selected annually by the City Council. The City Council meets on the second Tuesday of every month. As the legislative body for the City, the Council is responsible for adopting ordinances and resolutions, adopting the budget, setting fees, appointing committees, hiring the City Manager, providing policy direction to staff as well as various other duties. The City Manager is responsible for conducting the policies and direction of the Council along with overseeing the daily operations of the City.

The City provides a full range of services which include police protection, fire suppression, paramedic services, animal control and licensing, the construction and maintenance of streets and infrastructure, planning and zoning, building and safety, engineering and inspection, project management of the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), public services, code enforcement, business licensing and general administration. Other services that are within the City boundaries are provided by San Bernardino County, San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation, San Bernardino Unified School District, Redlands Unified School District, The YMCA of the East Valley (serving as the Parks & Recreation arm of the City), American Medical Response, and East Valley Water District.

For more information about the City of Highland, please visit their website at www.cityofhighland.org.

THE CITY OF HIGHLAND MISSION AND VALUES

Highland is dedicated to the betterment of the individual, the family, the neighborhood and the community. The City Council and the staff of the City of Highland are dedicated to providing the quality of public facilities and services that its citizens are willing to fund and will do so as efficiently as possible.

This Mission is established to reflect the following beliefs which represent the predominant beliefs of the community. They express what matters most in the conduct of public affairs affecting the citizenry of Highland.

RESPONSIBILITY

Everyone in the community has rights and is responsible for their own actions.

NEIGHBORHOOD STABILITY

Neighborhood stability and a sense of ownership are to be encouraged and strengthened.

SERVICE

Volunteer service is a valued community resource.

VISION

The community has a vision of the future and how it will get there.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Public resources and finances are to be stewarded carefully and conservatively-we live within our means and will not place huge debts on future generations.

FAMILY

Families are the basic unit of society and the essence of what makes our community. All values should be encouraged at this family level.

CREATIVITY

Creative solutions are the norm, not the exception.

Organizational Overview

The organization takes great pride in its fiscal stability, strong regional partnerships, and proactive approach to municipal services. Led by a five-member City Council and an experienced City Manager, the city's leadership fosters a collaborative work environment focused on long-term sustainability, responsiveness, and transparency. This progressive leadership approach ensures cooperative local growth while honoring the area's unique cultural history and geographic advantages.

The City of Highland is a financially stable city that has proven resilient in economic downturns, and its entrepreneurial spirit ensures that it takes maximum advantage of economic opportunities. City services are delivered with the assistance of over 43 full-time staff, a 2026-2027 Adopted Budget of \$80.1 million.

The biennial budget serves as the foundation for the City's financial planning and control. As part of each budget year, the goals and objectives of the City Council are incorporated into the Work Program. The Work Program is then used when preparing the budget to prioritize and fund projects.

The City of Highland contracts for a wide range of municipal services including police services, which are contracted with San Bernardino County, engineering, construction management and building inspection services, and animal control. Fire protection services are provided by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE).

In addition to the City Manager's Office which includes the City Clerk, the City has the following departments:

- ◆ Administrative Services
- ◆ Community Development
- ◆ Public Works
- ◆ Public Safety (contract)

The City of Highland is a well-balanced contract City and prides itself on having a responsive municipal government to match its strong sense of community. City employees work as a team in delivering high-quality customer service to its citizens, and hands-on involvement from supervisors and managers ensure excellence for its residents and businesses.

To review the City's Work Program, click [here](#).

Overview of the Department

The Community Development Department plays a pivotal role in shaping Highland's future by managing Planning, Building & Safety, Code Enforcement, and Housing/Economic Development functions. Under the "Come Home to Highland" economic campaign, the department is actively driving growth, along critical corridors, including the 3rd and 5th Street industrial areas, Base Line (Town Center), and Greenspot Road east of SR-210. The incoming Director will step into an action-oriented organization that values streamlined development entitlements, community-focused zoning, and strategic commercial expansion.

The Department consists of Building and Safety, Planning and Code Enforcement. Importantly, the Department is committed to providing excellent service to both internal and external customers with the highest degree of reliability and timeliness.

Overview of the Department continued

Currently, the Community Development Department is budgeted for 12 full-time positions as follows:

- ◆ Community Development Director
- ◆ Assistant Community Development Director
- ◆ Planning – 4 positions
- ◆ Building & Safety – 3 positions
- ◆ Code Enforcement – 3 positions

The Position

This at-will position is a key member of the City Manager's Executive Team and provides day-to-day management of the Community Development Department. Key responsibilities of this position include:

- ◆ Provide leadership and overall direction to department staff.
- ◆ Provide professional advice and guidance to the City Manager, City Council, Planning Commission, and stakeholder groups.
- ◆ Coordinate community development activities with other City departments and regulatory agencies.
- ◆ Evaluate land use, economic development, and growth management proposals to ensure compliance with applicable City, State, and Federal laws.
- ◆ Manage complex issues, rules, and regulations impacting various areas of the City with an entrepreneurial approach to problem solving and timely resolution.
- ◆ Address issues that may arise related to the dissolution of redevelopment and the successor agency.
- ◆ Assume fiscal responsibility for department and project-related budgets.

This role offers an exceptional opportunity to balance preservation with smart growth, ensuring Highland remains a premier destination to live, work, and build a business.

The Ideal Candidate

The new Community Development Director will have exceptional management, interpersonal, and communication skills, with a hands-on and proactive approach to addressing a broad range of urban planning, economic development, and development related challenges. The ideal candidate will have a strong desire to work in a team environment and will be a trendsetter with the ability to use their experience in urban planning to create and execute strategies that shape innovative solutions to critical issues regarding housing, commercial and economic development. The successful candidate will also value relationships and be known as a manager of people who encourages innovation and problem solving yet holds people accountable for quality work. It is very important that the new Director possesses a commitment to excellent customer service.

The ideal candidate should possess the following attributes:

- ◆ Exceptional leadership and communication skills-orally and in writing;
- ◆ Understanding of effective economic development and business attraction strategies;
- ◆ Outstanding character, integrity, and professionalism;
- ◆ Flexible and innovative in presenting solutions and strategies;
- ◆ Strong business acumen with the ability to work effectively with the business and development community as well as community partners and stakeholders; and
- ◆ Extensive knowledge of current trends and best practices that impact and influence all aspects of planning and economic development.

The ideal candidate will be known for being straight-forward in communication style and be able to build and maintain trust with both elected officials, colleagues in other jurisdictions and organizations, and community members.

Experience and Education

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

Experience: Five (5) years of increasingly responsible experience in municipal planning and community development, including two (2) years in a supervisory capacity.

Education: Equivalent to a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with major course work in urban and regional planning or a related field. Master's degree is desirable.

Compensation

The annual salary for this position is up to \$212,000 annually.

The City also offers an attractive benefits package including:

- ◆ **Retirement:** CalPERS retirement plan for Classic members is 2% @ 55 with the City paying both the employee and employer contribution. New employees to CalPERS are 2% at 62 and will pay one-half of the retirement costs.
- ◆ **Health Benefits:** Choice of HMO, HSA, EPO, or PPO medical plans through Kaiser or Anthem PACE with \$1,650 monthly cafeteria allowance.
- ◆ **Management Leave:** 120 hours per year.
- ◆ **Deferred Compensation:** A section 457 plan is available to full-time employees at their cost.
- ◆ **Post-Employment Healthcare:** If an employee works at least 5 years for the City and retires from the City, that employee is eligible to receive \$200 per month toward the cost of health care from CalPERS upon retirement.
- ◆ **Vacation Leave:** 80 hours per year to start and incrementally increasing to a max accrual of 160 hours per year. Option to buy back up to 80 hours of vacation per fiscal year.
- ◆ **Sick Leave:** 8 hours per month. Sick Leave Incentive Program to buy back up to 80 hours of sick leave per fiscal year if balance does not go below 192 hours. Any sick leave used during the year is deducted from the amount that can be purchased.
- ◆ **Life Insurance:** City paid term life insurance equivalent to employee's annual salary up to a max of \$300,000; additional life insurance purchase option.
- ◆ **Short Term Disability Coverage:** City paid short term wage replacement in the event of injury or illness and not able to work.
- ◆ **Holidays:** 13 observed holidays and 9 hours of floating leave annually.
- ◆ **Vehicle Allowance:** \$600 per month.
- ◆ **Cyber Security Allowance:** Receive \$100 per year (first payroll of January) to purchase cyber security insurance.
- ◆ **Flexible Spending Accounts:** Healthcare and Dependent Care.
- ◆ **Work Schedule:** Option of a 4/10 or 9/80 work schedule with City Hall closed Fridays.



To Be Considered

Closing date for receipt of interest is **October 5, 2026**. An electronic version of all submittals is required. Interested candidates should apply immediately by sending a comprehensive resume, a compelling cover letter, and notable accomplishments to [**apply@ralphandersen.com**](mailto:apply@ralphandersen.com).

References are not required at the time of submittal, and no contact will be made with references or current employers until a mutual interest has been established to ensure the utmost confidentiality.

Questions, nominations, and confidential inquiries regarding this position or the recruitment process should be addressed to: Fred Wilson, Project Director at (916) 630-4900 or by submitting an email to [**fred@ralphandersen.com**](mailto:fred@ralphandersen.com).

The City of Highland is an Equal Opportunity Employer



[**www.cityofhighland.org**](http://www.cityofhighland.org)