



PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

Recruitment Announcement

About the Community

Located on the north bank of the Columbia River, Vancouver is Washington's fourth-largest city and the second largest in the Portland-Vancouver metropolitan area. With a population of over 200,000 and direct services extending to nearly 300,000 residents, Vancouver is a growing and dynamic community that blends the amenities of a major urban center with the beauty and accessibility of the Pacific Northwest.

Nestled between the Pacific Ocean and the Cascade Mountains, Vancouver is less than 90 miles from the coast and just minutes from iconic natural landmarks such as the Columbia River Gorge, Mount St. Helens, and Mount Hood. Its unique location provides residents with a wealth of recreational opportunities, from hiking and skiing to kayaking and cycling, all within a short drive.

Vancouver is home to 90 parks, 20 natural areas, and an extensive 20-mile trail network that connects neighborhoods, parks, and natural features. The city is also home to Washington State University – Vancouver and Clark College, as well as headquarters and regional operations for several prominent employers.

Vancouver is one of the oldest cities in the

Northwest. Home to indigenous tribes for millennia before European settlement, its rich history precedes Washington statehood. Over the next 20 years, Vancouver anticipates adding more than 80,000 residents and 43,000 jobs, solidifying its role as a regional urban center and economic driver for the metropolitan area and the state.

Significant public and private investments are shaping Vancouver's future. Major developments are underway or planned throughout the city, including the redevelopment of the Heights District, the transformation of the Vancouver Waterfront Gateway, revitalization of the Fourth Plain Corridor, and large-scale mixed-use developments in East Vancouver such as the Vancouver Innovation Center and Columbia Palisades.





About the City

The City of Vancouver operates as a first-class charter city under a Council-Manager form of government. The City Council is comprised of seven members including the Mayor, all of whom are elected at large. Under the city Charter, the Mayor serves as the presiding officer of the Council and the ceremonial head of the city and members of Council serve as policy makers with no regular administrative duties. The City Council adopts a vision for the community, appoints the City Manager, sets policy direction and adopts a biennial budget. The City Manager advises Council on vision and policy, develops a recommended biennial budget and leads the city organization to carry out policy direction in support of achieving the community vision and policies of the Council. Vancouver is a full-service city, providing high quality direct services to incorporated (full service) and unincorporated (sewer, water, fire & EMS) areas. Services are provided by more than 1,300 full time employees and hundreds of seasonal employees who are committed to providing services aligned with the city's values. The city has a 2023-24 general fund of \$566 million and a total biennial budget of \$2 billion, including a \$362 million capital budget. The city is fiscally sound with a AA credit rating, carries a very low debt burden, and maintains healthy budget reserves. Vancouver is a leader in innovation and results oriented services in the region and has become known for transformative approaches to affordable housing, transportation planning, urban redevelopment, addressing homelessness, and evolving community expectations related to policing and public safety. All members of the city organization are committed and aligned to build a city of the future along the Columbia River through a shared commitment to equity, stewardship, resilience, and community safety. In doing so, all employees embrace the practice of the city's organization values of being collaborative, innovative, compassionate, empowered, and inclusive.

About the Position

The City is seeking an experienced, visionary, and collaborative Public Works Director to lead one of the City's largest and most varied departments. With approximately 390 employees and an annual budget of \$839 million, the Public Works Department delivers essential services and supports the City's growth, livability, and sustainability goals.

Reporting to the Deputy City Manager of Built Environment, the Public Works Director is responsible for setting strategy, directing complex operations, and ensuring the effective and equitable delivery of services across a wide array of programs, including transportation, water, sewer, stormwater, solid waste, engineering, construction management, parks and greenway maintenance, urban forestry, airfield operations, and utility billing.

This is an outstanding opportunity for a forward-thinking leader to help shape the future of a growing community, foster a strong organizational culture, and deliver high-impact public works services in one of the most desirable regions of the Pacific Northwest.

Key Responsibilities

The Public Works Director plans, organizes, coordinates, and directs all operations of the City's Public Works Department. The Director leads the department's efforts to maintain and improve the City's infrastructure and public works assets, while supporting strategic growth and sustainability initiatives.

Key responsibilities include:

- Provide leadership and strategic direction for the department's service areas, including engineering and operations for streets, water, wastewater, stormwater, solid waste, transportation, parks and greenway maintenance, urban forestry, airfield operations, fleet, and utility billing.
- Oversee the development and implementation of department goals, objectives, policies, and priorities; establish appropriate service and staffing levels; allocate resources effectively.
- Collaborate with other City departments, outside agencies, and the private sector to address regional infrastructure needs and align capital investments with the City's long-term vision.
- Represent the Public Works Department to the City Manager's Office, City Council, advisory bodies, and the public; explain, justify, and defend department programs and activities.
- Prepare and present reports, policy recommendations, and technical updates to elected officials, leadership teams, and stakeholder groups.
- Manage the development and administration of the department's biennial operating budget and capital improvement program; forecast staffing, equipment, materials, and funding needs.
- Lead and develop a talented workforce; promote employee engagement, professional development, and a strong organizational culture aligned with the City's values.
- Drive continuous improvement, innovation, and customer service excellence across all department operations.
- Respond to and resolve complex and sensitive public inquiries, issues, and complaints.
- Serve as a member of the City's Management Leadership Team, contributing to organization-wide policy discussions and strategic initiatives.

The Ideal Candidate

The City seeks a seasoned, unifying leader who is deeply committed to public service and building a resilient, thriving work force and community. The ideal candidate is a highly emotionally intelligent, strategic thinker with a demonstrated ability to manage complexity, drive innovation, and achieve results through collaboration.

The successful candidate will possess the following leadership characteristics:

LEADERSHIP:

- Inspire trust, motivate teams, and model high standards of integrity, accountability, and professionalism.
- Display balanced decision-making that combines analysis, wisdom, experience, and perspective.
- Maintain a strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in leadership and service delivery.

STRATEGIC VISION:

- Clearly articulate and translate the City's infrastructure goals into actionable plans that are realistic and effective.
- Champion data-driven decision-making and measurable outcomes.

INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY:

- Foster a culture of continuous improvement and encourage innovative approaches to problem-solving and service delivery.

WORKFORCE

DEVELOPMENT:

- Recruit, develop, mentor, and retain a talented, high-performing, and diverse team.
- Lead organizational change initiatives with a focus on collaboration, resilience, and empowerment.

BUSINESS AND

MANAGEMENT ACUMEN:

- Manage human, financial, and information resources strategically to maximize service effectiveness.
- Set high standards of performance and use accountability measures to track progress.

COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS:

- Build strong relationships across City departments, with elected officials, regional agencies, community partners, and residents.
- Collaborate effectively to resolve complex infrastructure and public policy issues.

COMMUNICATION:

- Communicate complex technical information clearly and persuasively to a wide range of audiences.
- Listen skillfully and respond thoughtfully to community concerns and needs.

CULTURAL COMPETENCY:

- Promote positive working relationships in diverse communities and cross-cultural settings.



Desirable Qualifications

A bachelor's degree in civil engineering, public administration, or a closely related field and eight years of increasingly responsible leadership experience in public works or a related field including five years in a senior management role. A master's degree and/or Professional Engineer license is desirable.



Compensation and Benefits

The annual salary range for this position is \$162,000 to \$283,000, depending on experience and qualifications. The City offers a comprehensive and competitive benefits package, including:

- Retirement Plan – The City participates in the Washington Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) as well as 457(b) and 401(a) plans.
- Health Insurance – The City offers multiple plan choices and pays a majority of the premium for the level of coverage the employee has selected. The city pays the full amount of premiums for dental and vision plans.
- Holidays – 11 paid holidays per year.
- Paid leave – The City provides Paid Time Off (PTO) accrued at a minimum of 180 hours per year that may be used for vacation and/or sick leave. In addition, the city provides 40 hours of exempt leave per year (prorated) to be used in the year granted.
- Life Insurance – City provides term life insurance in the amount of up to double the salary not to exceed \$300,000.
- Hybrid schedule flexibility
- Relocation assistance

APPLICATION PROCESS

To be considered for this position, please submit the following materials:

- A cover letter expressing your interest and outlining your qualifications
- A current resume

This position will remain open until filled. For first-round consideration, please apply by June 30, 2025 by visiting www.karrasconsulting.net and clicking on “View Open Positions.”

For questions or inquiries, please contact Marissa Karras at (360) 956-1336 or marissa@karrasconsulting.net.

