



# Pierce County Planning and Land Services Director

## ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT

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The Planning and Land Services (PALS) department delivers timely, consistent decisions and information to the unincorporated portions of Pierce County to promote the development of better communities. The Department has 76 FTEs (50% are represented by labor unions) and a 2012 operating budget of \$10.8 million. PALS is composed of six major divisions: Development Center; Building Safety and Inspection/Enforcement; Development Engineering, Current Planning; Resource Management and Advanced Long Range Planning.

The **Development Center** is a one-stop resource center for the intake of development and building applications. It is organized to include a front-line staff of Permit Technicians dedicated to processing applications and a multi-disciplinary Technical Support Staff to provide help in finding solutions to problems.

The **Building Safety and Inspection** division reviews and approves plans and inspects all new construction. It is charged with the enforcement of International Building and related construction codes including the Building Amnesty Program and investigating dangerous buildings for possible abatement.

The **Development Engineering** division performs all technical engineering plan reviews and approvals and provides field inspections for all approved development permits under construction.

The **Current Planning** division is responsible for processing all land use applications and for review and issuance of Administrative Determinations.

The **Resource Management** division performs all technical wetland, fish and wildlife and forest practices reviews and inspections associated



## APPLICATION PROCESS

Persons interested in this position should submit the following information:

- A letter of interest specifically addressing qualifications.
- Salary history.
- A current resume that reflects the size of staff managed and budget for prior positions.

If you have questions regarding this announcement, please call Marissa Karras at 360-956-1336. This position will remain open until filled. In order to be considered for the first round of interviews please submit your application materials by December 30, 2011 to [marissa@karrasconsulting.net](mailto:marissa@karrasconsulting.net) or by fax to 360-956-1348.

Pierce County 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.

## COMPENSATION

The mid-point of the annual salary for this position is \$ 122K. Benefits include comprehensive medical, dental, vision and life insurance, public employee retirement system contributions, holiday, vacation and sick leave.

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with development permits and is the authority for the State Environmental Policy Act.

The **Long Range Planning** division drafts changes to land use policy and regulations as mandated by law or as directed through a County Council Resolution. This group works closely with citizen advisory groups, Land Use Advisory Commissions, the Planning Commission and County Council.

***To learn more about PALS please visit the website at:  
<http://www.co.pierce.wa.us/pc/services/home/property/pals/palsmain.htm>***

## **THE POSITION**

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The Director is responsible for organizing, coordinating, and providing senior leadership and day-to-day management for the work of professional staff engaged in planning and development services. This position is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the Pierce County Executive and requires County Council confirmation. The position's essential functions includes the following:

- Coordinates multiple program elements in the development and control of comprehensive land-use plans and programs, or other major planning projects.
- Directs the formulation and revision of department metrics, goals and objectives consistent with the mission of the department and Pierce County.
- Oversees the implementation of plans and projects, and the administration of land-use and environmental codes and regulations; reviews and evaluates environmental impact reports.
- Directs the development and implementation of departmental financial management

policies and procedures to include payroll, purchase and inventory of supplies and equipment, accounting, grant administration, contracts, revenues and revenue analysis.

- Directs and monitors the preparation and administration of the department's annual budget.
- Identifies emerging policy issues in Pierce County's planning programs and develops a framework for resolution of issues.
- Prepares policy recommendations to guide decisions on planning projects and advises the Planning Commission, elected officials and stakeholders on matters involving planning, zoning and physical improvements.
- Develops and maintains effective relations with key stakeholders, managers within the County, other local governmental executives and officials, and the public.
- Represents the agency before local governmental and community organizations. Conducts public hearings for proposed planning-related activities and issues final decisions in the administration and enforcement of zoning or other land use codes and regulations.



## **CHALLENGES FACING THE DEPARTMENT**

The new Director must balance the need to accommodate new growth, yet preserve cultural and natural resources and the quality of life for Pierce County citizens.

The Director must think strategically about planning and land use issues. This person should champion change and innovation and create an environment that encourages original and innovative solutions. The ideal candidate will build on and communicate a vision that is aligned with the strategy and direction of Pierce County, all the while clarifying others' involvement, inspiring a sense of ownership, creating a culture of high performance and recognizing the efforts of others.

The Department has downsized significantly in the last three years going from approximately 176 FTE's to 76. The demand for permits has also dropped sharply during this period. These changes set the stage for the new director to bring innovative and best practices to the department as the County continues to face challenges presented by the current economic conditions.

## **THE IDEAL CANDIDATE**

### **DESIRED EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE**

A Bachelor's degree in urban planning, engineering, public or business



administration, or a related field; plus seven or more years of executive management experience. A Master's degree in a related field is desirable. Membership in American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) or Professional Engineers association is preferred.

### **LEADERSHIP**

Pierce County is seeking a Planning and Land Services Director who is a strong, dynamic, highly credible, unifying leader with demonstrated abilities in facilitating and implementing a clear vision and strategy. The Director will demonstrate principled leadership, personal courage, decisiveness and understand the operational and funding challenges of today's economy. Candidates should bring strengths in both external relations and internal management with an ability to balance the two.

### **PLANNING AND LAND SERVICES**

The Director must have demonstrated knowledge of governmental organization, rules, regulations and process and experience with Federal, state and local laws which govern public and environmental planning and code administration. It is critical for the Director to have thorough knowledge of planning concepts, principles and practices and the socio-economic implications of planning. Customer service is a priority.

### **COMMUNICATION**

The Director should speak and write with impact, efficiently explaining direction and ideas with conviction in all settings. The Director should have skills in public relations activities to include speaking before large groups, drafting news releases and stories, articulating division goals and projects to the media, the County Council and other government officials. Active listening, open communication and the ability to inspire trust are all important traits.

## **MANAGEMENT SKILLS**

The ideal candidate will have a full complement of management skills including a comprehensive understanding of budgeting, customer service, planning, talent management, change management and public relations.

## **STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS**

The Director will work effectively with the Pierce County Council and other county officials to keep them apprised of policy issues affecting the Department. They should be fully aware of and have the ability to mediate and resolve controversial planning problems involving opposing interest groups as well as being able to make decisions and to exercise judgment in developing, applying and interpreting departmental policies and procedures.

## **ABOUT PIERCE COUNTY**

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Pierce County has a population of about 805,000 and is governed by an Executive/Council form of government. The County boasts tremendous outdoor opportunities with miles of Puget Sound waterfront, Mt. Rainier National Park, 361 fresh-water lakes, alpine and cross-country skiing a short drive away and nationally ranked year-round golf courses in the vicinity, while also offering all the urban amenities. Major industries include health care, technology, agriculture, timber products and military installations. Pierce County is home to the City of Tacoma, several suburban cities, small towns, and rural communities as well as forests and farmlands. Pierce County's moderate climate combined with a contrasting geography of water and mountains encourage a wealth of year round outdoor activities such as sailing, kayaking, fishing, skiing and hiking.

