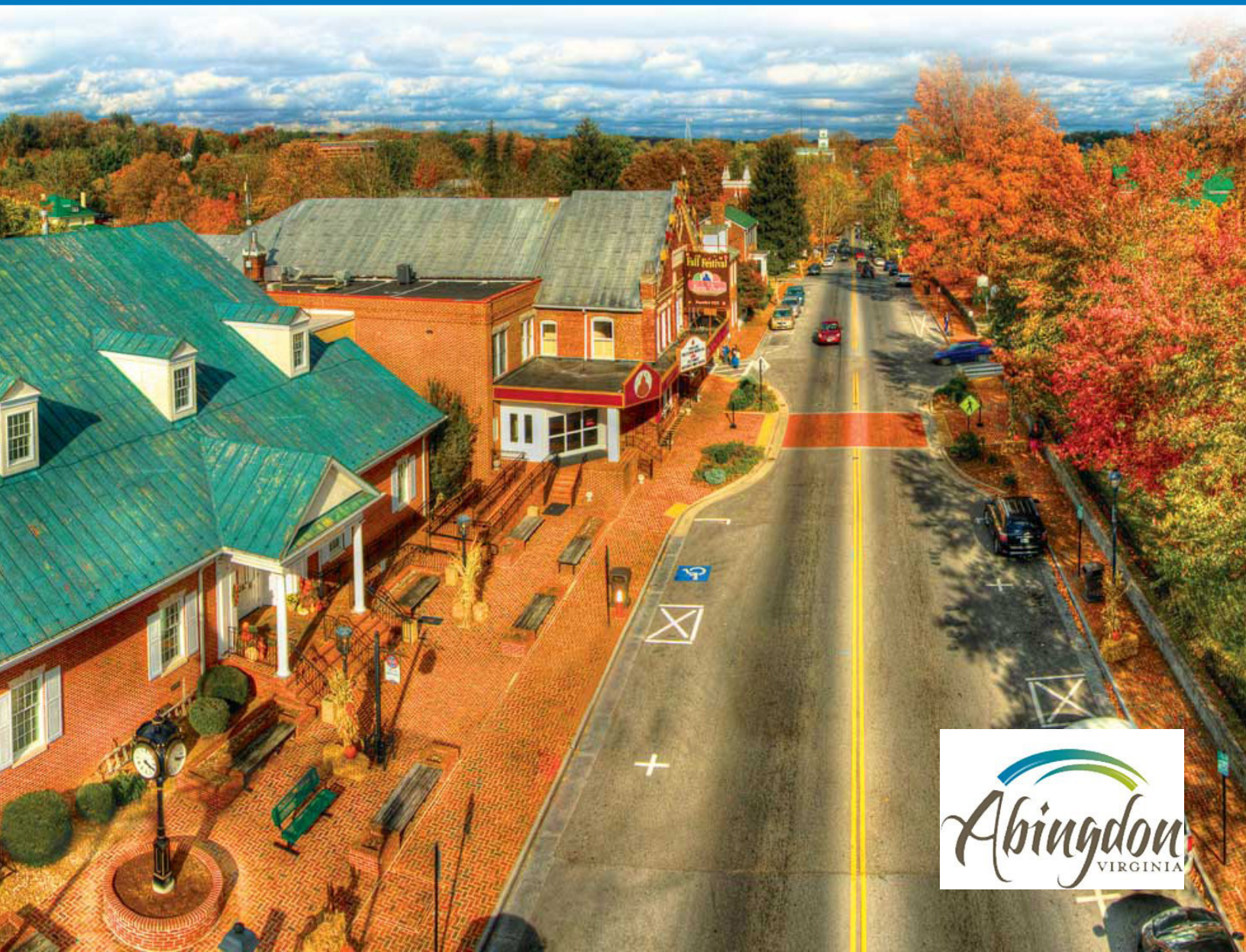


Director of Community Development Profile

Abingdon

Virginia





TOWN OF **ABINGDON**

The Town of Abingdon is seeking an experienced planning professional to serve as Director of Community Development. The successful candidate reports to the Town Manager and will manage and deliver plan review, Town code interpretation and enforcement, zoning, land use, and other duties as assigned by the Town Manager.

This recruitment profile describes the Town of Abingdon to prospective candidates, identifies the Town Manager's priorities, outlines issues, challenges, and opportunities that the new Director will face, and describes the "ideal" candidate in terms of qualifications, leadership style, and desired characteristics for the position of Director of Community Development.

Qualified candidates are encouraged to submit a cover letter and resume, with salary expectations and professional references, to The Berkley Group via email at margaret.schmitt@bgllc.net. While the position is open until filled, review of candidates will begin on or around **July 5, 2021**; however, highly qualified candidates may be invited for interview at any time. Inquiries relating to the Director of Community Development position may be directed to:

Margaret Schmitt

The Berkley Group

P.O. Box 181

Bridgewater, Virginia 22812

Email: margaret.schmitt@bgllc.net

Mobile: (434) 851-5814



Abingdon, VA

Community Background

The Town of Abingdon sits in the scenic Blue Ridge Highlands region of Southwest Virginia. Established by an act of the Assembly of Virginia in 1778, the town was named after the ancestral home of Martha Washington. The town's location on Interstate 81, approximately 15 miles above the Virginia-Tennessee border, makes it easily accessible from much of the eastern United States. Abingdon is the county seat of Washington County and is part of the Kingsport-Bristol (TN)-Bristol (VA) Metropolitan Statistical Area, which is a component of the Johnson City-Kingsport-Bristol, TN-VA Combined Statistical Area, commonly known as the "Tri-Cities" region.

Abingdon enjoys an exemplary quality of life with both natural recreation and major metropolitan areas nearby. Five other state capitals are closer to the town than the Commonwealth's capital of Richmond. Jefferson National Forest, the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area, Grayson Highlands State Park, and the Appalachian Trail, as well as numerous streams, rivers, and lakes, are easily accessible from the town. The western terminus of the Virginia Creeper Trail, a popular rails-to-trails project, is in downtown Abingdon. Bikers come from all over to get a shuttle to Whitetop Mountain, 35 miles away, and ride the mostly downhill trail back to Abingdon. The Town of Abingdon is characterized by its charm, historic buildings, unique businesses, and arts and cultural activities. Downtown is a Virginia Historic Landmark and its 20-square block Historic District includes many restored and preserved buildings such as the Fields-Penn House (built in 1860) and The Arts Depot, a restored 1870 railroad station. A Four-Star, Historic Hotel of America, the Martha Washington Inn



& Spa, built in 1832, sits across the street from the Barter Theatre. Considered the "State Theatre of Virginia," the Barter Theatre is one of the longest-running professional theatres in the nation, hosting such Hollywood luminaries as Gregory Peck, Patricia Neal, and Ernest Borgnine.

Abingdon is one of the towns along "The Crooked Road: Virginia's Heritage Music Trail" and is home to the annual Virginia Highlands Festival, one of the most popular events in Virginia. Agriculture has historically played an important role in the life of the region, although production has shifted away from tobacco to more varied crops, beef cattle, dairy, and eggs. The Abingdon Farmers Market and farm-to-table restaurants are popular attractions.

All of this, a thriving arts scene, foodie culture, vibrant history, and great outdoor recreation are just a few of the reasons that USA Today named Abingdon the #2 Southern Small Town in 2015. The high quality of life and the low cost of living make Abingdon an excellent place to live, work, and play.

Abingdon students attend Washington County public schools or private schools. Virginia Highlands Community College (VHCC), offering two-year associate degrees, is in the town. The Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center, on the campus of VHCC, provides the region with access to undergraduate and graduate degree programs and courses from participating institutions Emory & Henry College, Old Dominion University, Radford University, University of Virginia, University of Virginia's College at Wise, Virginia Commonwealth University, Virginia Highlands Community College, Virginia Intermont College, and Virginia Tech. Emory & Henry College is located seven miles north of the town.

Abingdon's population of nearly 8,000 is approximately 93% white, 3% African American, 2% Hispanic, and 2% Asian. The Median Household Income is \$42,716 (2018). Washington County's population, which includes town residents, is approximately 54,400. Regional employment is focused on transportation equipment, specialty chemicals, and metal manufacturing; distribution; health care; professional, scientific, and technical services; lodging; and food and retail services. K-VA-T Food Stores, Inc., the owner of the Food City grocery chain, has its corporate headquarters and a distribution center in Abingdon. Johnston Memorial Hospital, a 116-bed, not-for-profit facility, provides healthcare to residents of the region.

The Town Council and management are proud of the quality services provided in Abingdon, which are supported by low tax rates. In Fiscal Year 2020-21, the real estate tax rate is \$0.28 per \$100 of assessed value and the personal property tax rate is \$0.76 per \$100 of assessed value. In addition to low property taxes, the Town's 7% meals tax and 7% transient occupancy tax allow Abingdon to remain competitive with larger localities when competing for business development, while also preserving the quality of life of a small town.

Town Government

The Town of Abingdon has approximately 120 employees and 60 part-time/seasonal employees, with a FY 2020-2021 General Fund budget of \$12.45 million, and a Capital Projects Fund budget of \$8.6 million and Street Maintenance Fund of \$3.38 million. The Sewer Fund, an enterprise fund, has a budget of \$5.4 million.

The Town of Abingdon is governed by a five-member Town Council, elected at-large to four-year, staggered terms. The Council is the legislative policy-making body for the town government. The Council elects a Mayor from its members, who presides at meetings of the Council and is recognized as the head of the town government for ceremonial and certain statutory purposes. The Council appoints a Town Manager who is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the town government, appoints and supervises employees, implements policies, and addresses priorities adopted by the Council. The Director of Community Development reports directly to the Town Manager.

The Town of Abingdon is recognized for its strong financial position and recent development efforts and seeks a Director of Community Development who will work effectively with the Town Manager, Town Council, the Planning Commission, Historic Preservation Review Board, and the community. S&P Global Ratings recently assigned an 'AA' long-term rating to Abingdon's series 2020 general obligation (GO) capital improvement and refunding bonds, affirming the 'AA' issuer credit rating (ICR) for the Town.

The Director of Community Development manages, supervises, and delivers professional planning, development/redevelopment, code compliance, and zoning services consistent with the Town Code and Comprehensive Plan. They provide technical assistance to the Town Manager, Town Council, Planning Commission, and Historic Preservation Review Board.



Challenges, Issues & Opportunities

The Town Manager has identified several issues and challenges to be addressed by the Director of Community Development, including:

- Actively support the ongoing study related to affordable housing.
- Collaborate with and understand the various perspectives of community stakeholders and interest groups to balance the aspirations of the groups with overall Town needs and resources.
- Implement the recently approved Comprehensive Plan.
- Develop the code enforcement function to support Town goals.
- Address transportation issues in Town including, and not limited to, access to the developing sports complex, connector roads, and interchanges.
- Continue to support the commercial development that is underway and develop appropriate reuse of abandoned properties.
- Support ongoing projects to update the Zoning and Subdivision ordinances.
- Enhance internal working relationships and create collaborative working relationships across Town departments.
- Support staff's professional development and model a strong work ethic and commitment to the community.

This position offers the successful candidate the opportunity to be a critical team member in the Town's ongoing commitment to the development of The Meadows, a 70-acre mixed-use site off Exit 17. The project includes 30 acres of privately developed commercial property and a 40-acre Town developed sports complex. The commercial phase of the project has been completed by the private developers and the site is mostly leased. The Abingdon Town Council is committed to the project and is working to fulfill the Town's obligations, which includes the development of the sports complex, which is currently under construction and expected to be completed in December 2021.





Position Profile

Director of Community Development, Abingdon

Qualifications, Education & Experience

The following education and experience factors are the expected qualifications for successful performance:

- Bachelor's degree from a four-year college or university with a major in public administration, planning, architecture, urban design, geography, business administration, or a related field; Master's degree is preferred.
- Five years of increasingly responsible technical and managerial experience in community development, planning, or closely related field.
- Certified Zoning Administrator (CZA) designation within twelve months of hire; AICP certification is preferred.
- Demonstrated ability to interpret, explain, and apply applicable laws, codes, regulations, and design standards.
- Ability to prioritize, organize, and manage multiple projects.
- Demonstrated ability to work successfully in a team environment, functioning for the good of the organization over the individual.
- Customer-focused while understanding the impact of decisions on other departments' work.
- Ability to assess environmental cues and maintain situational awareness.
- Demonstrated ability to effectively manage people and programs, providing clear direction and establishing accountability.
- Model strong work ethic and commitment to the community.

Personal Traits & Desired Characteristics

- Absolute integrity, ensuring ethical, equitable, honest, fair, open, and personable interactions with the Town Council, Town Manager, Town employees, and community members.
- Professionally competent, with confidence tempered by humility.
- Strong interpersonal skills: assertive and confident without being abrasive.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills, including the ability to listen effectively and understand differing views.
- Engaging and collaborative, setting a departmental vision and leading to map out and implement effective processes and schedules.
- Results-oriented focus, moderated by patience.
- Confident in role and job knowledge.
- Ability to serve as a working manager, sharing the workload while maintaining departmental leadership and supporting teamwork across other departments.

Performance Expectations

- Short-term, immediate actions will be to review Town code, Zoning and Subdivision ordinances, Comprehensive Plan, policies, and procedures.
- Review and get up to speed on current projects.
- Attend Town Council, Planning Commission, and Historical Preservation Review Board meetings and other meetings as assigned by the Town Manager.
- A commitment to open and transparent government; promoting a positive and interactive relationship with Town officials, employees, and stakeholders.
- Effective communications with all stakeholders; presenting information in a form understandable to various audiences.
- A focus on promoting intra and interdepartmental communication, cooperation, and collaboration.
- Fair and equitable treatment of department employees.

Compensation & Benefits

Compensation for the Director of Community Development is dependent upon qualifications and experience within a range of \$70,000 – \$85,000 annually. The successful candidate will be provided the Town's benefits package including participation in the Virginia Retirement System (VRS), health/dental/vision insurance, vacation and sick leave, professional development support, and other benefits provided for all Town employees.

Application Process

Initial review of candidates will begin on or around July 5, 2021. Applications received after that date may be considered until the position is filled. Timely submittal will ensure the most advantageous review. Highly qualified candidates may be invited to interview at any time. To be considered, please **submit a cover letter, resume, salary expectations, and professional references** to The Berkley Group, via e-mail to margaret.schmitt@bgllc.net. Questions may be directed to:

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For Additional Information

Visit <https://abingdon-va.gov/>

The Town of Abingdon is an Equal Opportunity Employer