INVITES YOUR INTEREST IN THE POSITION OF

DIRECTOR of DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Positioned Perfectly... for a great place to work, play and live

Raccoon River Park (632 acres)

Park includes picnicking, playgrounds, walking trails, swimming, fishing, dog park, softball complex, soccer field, archery facility and nature lodge

Hy-Vee Triathlon hosted in WDM
The City of West Des Moines is a rapidly growing community located within the Des Moines-West Des Moines Metropolitan Area. Considered a regional employment center, the City offers more than 60,000 jobs and hosts a daytime population of an estimated 135,000. In addition to the City’s strong and expanding business community, the City of West Des Moines has a wide array of amenities and culture. Most recently recognized as a top locality for young professionals, West Des Moines is an increasingly diverse and vibrant community that has established a sound economic base from which to build and promote business.

The City is seeking a highly qualified candidate to fill the position of Director of Development Services. Due to the high volume of development activity and growth of the community, the City created a Community and Economic Development Department which necessitated creating a new position of Director of Development Services.

This new position will develop and implement a unified vision, mission, goals and service levels to the development review process; to consolidate the responsibilities and leadership for the development review process; better align employee resources that contribute to the development review process; and to enhance customer service. The selected individual will work under the direction of the City Manager and will be a senior level Department Head supervising the overall operations of the Development Services Department which includes development planning and building inspection and will work closely with the City’s Engineering Service department.

ABOUT THE CANDIDATE

The minimum job requirements are: 1) Bachelor’s Degree in Community and Regional Planning, Landscape Architecture, Architecture, Public Administration or related field; 2) Eight years of related work experience in managing a broad range of municipal services including engineering/architectural design, planning or development for an organization of comparable size and complexity with experience in a growth community strongly preferred, 3) Three years of management experience. Equivalent experience may be substituted for all or part of formal education requirements at the discretion of the City.

The successful candidate for the Director of Development Services position should be a “can do” individual who is committed to providing the highest quality of service to the City and the development community; have a proven track record of creatively coming up with options that fit within the parameters of City ordinances/codes and/or federal/state laws; and have proven collaboration skills working with public and private entities.

Desired Professional and Personal Attributes:

The following are the desired professional and personal attributes of West Des Moines’ next Director of Development Services:

- A collaborative person on the cutting edge of development services that is professional and highly customer service oriented and responsive.

ABOUT THE POSITION

Under the direction of the City Manager, the Director of Developmental Services is responsible for planning, directing, managing, and overseeing the activities and operation of Development Services. The Director oversees the City’s development review process, building plan checks and inspection, and planning efforts.

- An individual that is visionary, innovative, and possesses new ideas and concepts in the planning and development field.
- Able to deal effectively in a political environment, but is apolitical.
- A calm and empowering individual who can effectively deal with a high volume of development activity in a rational manner.
- An outstanding verbal and written communicator with proven interpersonal skills and a pleasing personality.
- A hard working and outstanding leader and manager who is self-directed, organized, practical, fair and consistent.
- An effective negotiator, consensus builder and facilitator who can work well in a fast-paced growth environment where considerable conflict is present.
- A team player who is timely and efficient in processing projects and who holds Department staff accountable for results.
- A person who exercises sound judgment and decision-making skills.

The new Director of Development Services should be a high-energy individual and a person who possesses a passion for the mission of the Department and its delivery of services to its constituents. The successful candidate should also possess excellent problem solving skills, be able to multi-task, be able to think outside the box and be an individual who enjoys working in a collaborative environment. Also, the person should be able to effectively deal with change, is someone who is energized by working in a high growth environment and gets satisfaction from making things happen and producing results.

The ideal candidate must have the ability to take initiative, work independently with very little direct supervision and manage the development and implementation of strategic planning methods consistent with the City’s long-range plans.
Job Duties and Responsibilities:

- Direct overall operations and activities of the Planning and Building Inspections Divisions and manage processes, programs, systems, operations, goals and objectives ensuring that appropriate communication and coordination of efforts occur between Department employees, other Departments of the City, the City Manager, Mayor/City Council members, outside agencies, applicants and their representatives involved in the development review process.

- Meet with developers, their consultants, and interested citizens to discuss development proposals.

- Meet with Mayor/City Council, City Manager, Department Heads and other key staff to share information and discuss issues regarding projects and programs to determine priorities and resource management.

- Negotiate, arbitrate and resolve program, project and policy issues/conflicts with the development community and the public by consulting with the City Manager, Mayor/City Council, Plan and Zone Commission and/or City staff as appropriate.

- Prepare reports and memorandums to various committees, Departments, Board of Adjustment, Plan and Zoning Commission, City Manager, and City Council.

- Provide and direct staff support to the Plan and Zoning Commission, and the Board of Adjustment.

- Prepare and review legal documents, i.e., easements, ordinances, resolutions, affidavits, etc. that are generated within the Planning Division. Review legal documents from applicants' legal counsel to ensure City and public interests are protected.

- Review and assist in the writing of Planned Unit Development (PUD) and Specific Plan ordinances, which create detailed land use, zoning, master planning, landscaping, open space, architectural, parking, and development standards.

- Direct the selection, orientation, training, performance management, wage administration, and discipline of employees in the Development Services in accordance with City policy.

- Assure fair and consistent treatment of all employees in Development Services and that all employees comply with all City policies and procedures.

- Assure that all work performed in Development Services meets the City's standards for customer service, accuracy, quality, and efficiency.

- Direct activities of the unit to assure that appropriate communication and coordination of efforts occurs with other units of the City and other agencies involved in the development review process. Coordinate with other City Departments and the applicant to ensure execution and attainment of necessary studies and permits.

- Assure that the City's mission, goals and objectives are fully supported and initiated. This includes, but is not limited to, support of the following initiatives: the quality initiative; Mayor/City Council strategies and various other City-sponsored work teams such as Safety, Employee Relations and Wellness.

- Perform other duties and responsibilities as assigned.

ABOUT WEST DES MOINES

Located at the crossroads of Interstates 80 and 35, West Des Moines, Iowa, has established a well-deserved reputation as a rapidly growing community with a vibrant economic base and quality of life. With a 2014 population estimated at 63,731, West Des Moines has grown by approximately 70 percent in the last two decades and is projected to grow by another 44 percent in the next two decades. The community currently consists of 47.3 square miles located in four counties-Polk, Dallas, Warren, and Madison.

The community has a highly educated workforce as the number of residents with bachelor’s degrees is 50 percent. In addition, West Des Moines’ median household income is 37 percent greater than the national average.

History:

West Des Moines was incorporated in 1893 as Valley Junction, a railroad town with a population of 500. The decline of the railroad industry and the Great Depression convinced community leaders to rename the city in 1938 to West Des Moines to help spur progress and give the city a suburban image.

Economy:

While West Des Moines’ population growth has been impressive, its job growth has been even more impressive. In the last decade, the community added close to 20,000 jobs for a growth rate of 49.6 percent.

West Des Moines is the tenth largest city in Iowa but ranks fourth in retail sales, third in taxable property valuation, and second in hotel/motel tax collections. Its largest employers such as Athene USA, Wells Fargo Mortgage, Wells Fargo Card Services, American Equity and Farm Bureau Insurance and Financial are in the finance and insurance sectors. The community’s growth is due not only to its prime location in Central Iowa but also to quality planning that ensures a balanced mix of land uses and adequate infrastructure to accommodate growth.

West Des Moines has experienced more than $2.2 billion worth of development in the last ten years. The community is a major employment center for Central Iowa with a daytime population of 135,680. Some of the major recent developments include:

- Jordan Creek Town Center, a 200-acre upscale retail and entertainment complex.
- Wells Fargo Home Mortgage’s addition of over 300,000 square feet to its existing 1 million square-foot North American corporate campus that will house more than 5,600 employees.
- New home to Whole Foods and Trader Joe’s.
- Microsoft’s 1,165,000 square feet, $1.2 billion Data Center.

While West Des Moines has focused much attention in recent years on new development, it has not neglected its original roots, Valley Junction. Through public-private co-operation, Valley Junction has been restored and revitalized into a dynamic commercial, residential, and tourist area. Valley Junction includes 150 independent, locally owned businesses with unique dining venues and turn-of-the-century architecture.
Valley Junction has been part of the Main Street Program for 27 years and was a winner of the 2012 Great American Main Street Award. The City has facilitated the investment of $50+ million of public (federal, state, and local) funds for streetscape, street and utility infrastructure, housing rehabilitation, and redevelopment in Valley Junction during the past 20 years. One of the most creative projects was the construction of a fire sprinkler mainline system for commercial buildings. The City used a federal grant and TIF funds to construct the initial fire sprinkler mainline system. Without this project, it is cost-prohibitive for these historic structures to be renovated because doing so requires compliance with current codes including fire sprinkling. This is the only project of its kind in the country and will enable Valley Junction businesses to grow by reducing their investment in fire sprinklers to 10-20 percent of the total cost.

Also, the City used $1.5 million of federal and state grants and TIF funds to renovate its original, 100-year old City Hall into office space and is occupied by the Historic Valley Junction Foundation which operates the community’s Main Street Program. This is a demonstration green project for its use of energy-efficiency features in the remodeling of a historic structure. The City of West Des Moines has been awarded LEED Platinum Certification.

Transportation:
The Des Moines metropolitan area with a population in excess of 680,000 is centrally located within the Midwest with good transportation access to major markets. One-day truck and rail service from the Des Moines area is available to markets such as Chicago, Kansas City, Omaha, Milwaukee, and Minneapolis. Also, the Des Moines International Airport offers air travel to both the East and West Coasts in less than five hours.

Regional bus service is available in West Des Moines through the Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority (DART) which also provides paratransit handicapped bus service. In addition, the West Des Moines Human Services Department provides free transportation in wheel-chair accessible buses and a van to medical appointments and congregate meals for residents who are elderly, disabled, or low-income.

Recreation and Leisure:
The West Des Moines Parks and Recreation Department offers many recreational programs and activities year-round for all ages. There are more than 1200 acres of parkland and open space with parks ranging in size from the half-acre Kiwanis Park to the 632-acre Raccoon River Park which offers picnicking, swimming, fishing, and other activities. The City also has two aquatic centers, a soft-ball complex, and nature lodge. West Des Moines also has a 45-mile trail system that connects to the metropolitan Des Moines trail system.

The City has a 52,000 square-foot Library which is located on its municipal campus. The Library is open every day of the week for a total of 68 hours and offers resources to people of all ages to develop and sustain a lifelong appreciation for the rewards of self-directed reading and learning.

Education:
Iowa is known for its emphasis on education and routinely has some of the highest performing school districts in the country. West Des Moines is no exception offering a variety of excellent K-12 educational opportunities including three public school districts (West Des Moines Community Schools, Waukee Community School District and Norwalk Community School District) and four private schools (Dowling High School, Iowa Christian Academy, Sacred Heart School, and St. Francis of Assisi School). The largest high school in West Des Moines, Valley High School, averages ten National Merit Scholarship Finalists annually, has an average ACT score of 24.6, and has a certified staff-student ratio of 1 to 15. West Des Moines has many nearby post-secondary education opportunities including Drake University, Iowa State University, Grandview College, and the Des Moines Area Community College, as well as Simpson College, Upper Iowa University and Viterbo University.

Recognitions for West Des Moines:
West Des Moines has garnered national and regional recognition for its accomplishments. Some of the recent accomplishments include:

- Area Development magazine listed West Des Moines as #29 out of 100 leading locations in the United States
- The Business Record has named WDM the Best City Conducive to Business for the 16th consecutive year.
- West Des Moines was recognized as one of the most exciting places in Iowa according to the real estate blog, Movoto.com. Factors include nightlife, live music venues, and age of residents.
- Policom Corp, an economic research firm, named the Des Moines-West Des Moines Metropolitan #1 in a ranking of economic strength amongst metropolitan areas. The ranking is derived using data that includes per capita income, construction and retail.
- West Des Moines has been named one of the Top Ten Small Cities for Education in America by real estate blog, Movoto.com. The City received very positive scores indicating a great environment for education.
- The Des Moines-West Des Moines Metropolitan area was named #1 Best Medium-Sized Metro Area for Homeownership by NerdWallet Finance Blog. Three major factors were used to determine the selection: home availability, affordability and growth within the area.
- Google recognized West Des Moines in August 2013 as the recipient of the inaugural eCity of Iowa award which identifies the strongest online business community in each state – the digital capitals of America.
- Forbes Magazine named the Des Moines-West Des Moines metro as the best city for jobs in June, 2013.
West Des Moines’ Business Climate:

“West Des Moines is progressive and forward-thinking, and I see that reflected throughout the City. It’s displayed visually in the progressive planning, and I think it’s a world-class community for both business and residents.” – Mark Riser, President of Windsor Windows & Doors.

“Out-of-town guests have commented on how beautiful West Des Moines is, especially GuideOne’s building and campus. They appreciate how easy it is to navigate the City and have particularly enjoyed the West Glen and Jordan Creek town centers. They feel West Des Moines has a lot to offer residents and guests.” – Melany Stonewall, Senior Communications Specialist, GuideOne Insurance.

“I could have never chosen a better place than West Des Moines.” – Liang Chou, Olympic and World Champion gymnastics coach and owner Chou’s Gymnastics and Dance Institute.

“I’m blown away by the great things young professionals are involved in. They really are defining their city.” – Chrystal Tamillo, Operating Partner, Flemings Steakhouse & Wine Bar.

A Sound Economy:

West Des Moines has more than double the average per capita assessed valuation of Iowa’s ten largest cities.

The City has a AAA bond rating from Standard and Poor’s, an AAA rating from Moody’s Investor Services and has received the Government Finance Officer’s Association (GFOA) Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the past 19 years.

The City prides itself on its ability to deliver a high level of services to its citizens. The City contracts with the ETC Institute to measure citizen satisfaction with City services every two years. The ETC Institute benchmarks West Des Moines’ citizen satisfaction ratings against 29 other similar-sized cities across the country in 49 comparative factors. In the most recent survey conducted in 2012, the City of West Des Moines ranked above the national average of its benchmark cities in all 49 comparative factors and received the highest ranking in 21 of the 49 comparative factors. Most impressively, West Des Moines’ Overall Satisfaction Index has increased by 9 points since 2002 while the average of its benchmark cities has decreased by 5 points.

The City of West Des Moines has operated under the council-manager form of government since 1964 and has had six City Managers during that time period. The Council consists of the Mayor and five Council Members elected on a nonpartisan basis to four-year overlapping terms. Three Council Members are elected by wards, and two are elected at-large. The Mayor is elected at-large and does not vote on Council agenda items but is the official representative of the City, presiding officer of the Council, and its policy spokesperson.

The Council appoints the City Manager, City Attorney, and City Clerk. The Library Board appoints the Library Director, and the Water Works Board appoints the Water Works Manager. All other personnel decisions are made by the City Manager or those to whom the Manager delegates the responsibility.

The City Council has five Council Committees which assist the City in policy deliberation and make recommendations to the full Council. The Mayor makes Committee appointments, and each Council Member chairs one Committee and serves on one other Committee. The Committees are: Finance and Administration; Public Safety; Public Works; Code Enforcement; and Planning and Development.

West Des Moines is a full-service municipal government providing a wide array of City services (including the only municipal Human Services Department in Iowa).
COMPENSATION

The compensation for the Director of Development Services job is highly competitive including an excellent fringe benefit package. The starting salary is dependent on the selected individual’s qualifications and match with the desired attributes being sought by the City. The City will pay reasonable and customary moving expenses if the successful candidate relocates to the City of West Des Moines.

HOW TO APPLY

For additional information on this outstanding opportunity, please contact James L. Mercer, President/CEO, The Mercer Group, Inc. at 505-466-9500; jmercer@mercergroupinc.com.

Confidential resumes should be sent by close of business November 10, 2014, to:

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The City of West Des Moines is an Equal Opportunity Employer. The City of West Des Moines does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, national origin, gender identity or disability in employment.