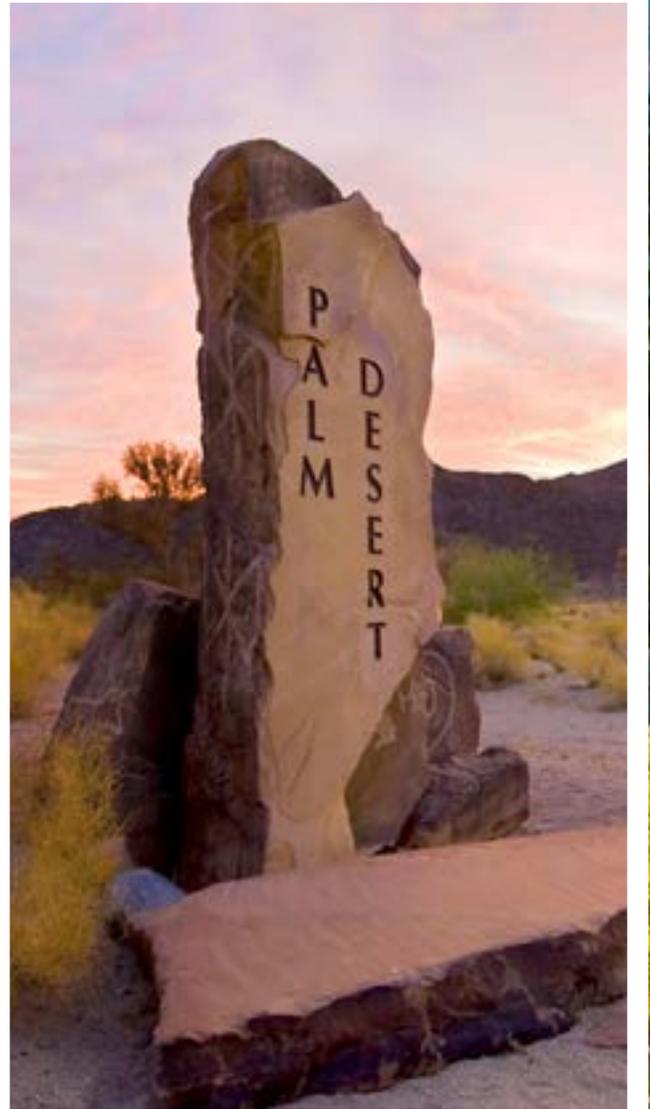




PALM DESERT  
CALIFORNIA



Photo provided by: Cary Tyler



# Development Services Director

Recruitment Services Provided by Ralph Andersen & Associates



## About the City of Palm Desert

The City of Palm Desert is a thriving, year-round community with the natural beauty, cultural, and recreational amenities of a resort destination. The City features big-city resources in a friendly, small-town setting offering first class educational opportunities, safe and clean streets, as well as plentiful shopping and community events. Palm Desert is considered the geographical center of the Coachella Valley. With stunning mountain views, 350 days of sunshine a year, and an environment that encourages an active lifestyle, the City attracts a wide variety of people. Set within a beautiful desert environment, the City's 50,000 full-time and 32,000 seasonal residents enjoy outdoor activities including hiking, golfing, and tennis, while also delighting in vibrant options for arts, culture, and shopping. The City is at the center of a 40-mile pathway across the Coachella Valley, extending from Palm Springs to Coachella, that is accessible to bicyclists, pedestrians, and low-speed electric vehicles (CV Link). A variety of educational opportunities are also available, providing residents with a lifetime of learning from kindergarten to advanced college degrees. Palm Desert has three college campuses: College of the Desert, California State University, San Bernardino, and University of California, Riverside.

Developed and owned by the City of Palm Desert, the Desert Willow Golf Resort boasts a stunning clubhouse with a full-service restaurant, vista bar, and a well-equipped pro shop. One of Desert Willow's two Championship courses was featured on the front page of the Smithsonian magazine for its use of desert landscape and sustainable water management while offering unmatched panoramic vistas and a lush, oasis-like experience. It continues to garner awards as one of the nation's premier, pace-setting public golf resorts. When completed, the resort will contain more than 1,000 hotel/timeshare rooms, as well as commercial development and an entertainment venue. In addition, Palm Desert has nearly 500 acres of remaining undeveloped land, with another 135 acres dedicated to the Universities, offering the opportunity for talented individuals to be part of shaping an even brighter future for the community.

## The City Organization

Incorporated in 1973, the City of Palm Desert operates under the Council-Manager form of government. The political leadership of five Council Members elected to four-year overlapping terms is combined with the daily leadership of the City Manager. Palm Desert contracts for many services, including public safety, through Riverside County. Park operations and recreational activities are contracted through the Desert Recreation District. The City's 105 employees are proud to work for the preservation and growth of the community and take pride in providing exceptional customer service to residents and visitors alike.

The fiscal year 2020/2021 budget continues a commitment to keep City operations lean and allocates funds to the City's highest priorities: public safety; economic development; completion of capital projects; and maintenance of the City's neighborhoods, parks, and roadways. The budget reflects the extraordinary economic challenges of the global COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on the City's General Fund operating budget. With the wellbeing and safety of Palm Desert's residents, visitors, and businesses of primary importance to the City and not yet knowing what the new 'normal' looks like, the City Council did not make drastic budget cuts to cover a shortfall, but instead carefully considered operational adjustments and authorized the use of reserves to balance the budget.

[cityofpalmdesert.org](http://cityofpalmdesert.org)

## The Development Services Department

The Development Services Department was recently created in a reorganization that aimed to bring all functions related to development into a single department. In doing so, a single director has overall responsibility for all development related activities which greatly increases the agility and efficiency of the City. Functions include: Building and Safety (9 FTEs), Code Compliance (7 FTEs), One Stop Shop (4 FTEs), Planning and Engineering (4 FTEs), Housing (2 FTE), and Park Administration (1 FTE). Total staffing is 30 FTEs that also include a Deputy Director and a Management Specialist. Both the housing and parks functions primarily involve the administration of contracts to provide services for these significant functions. The Palm Desert Housing Authority operates over 1,100 affordable rental units and its outstanding park system significantly contributes to the high quality of life in Palm Desert.

## Challenges and Opportunities

The next Development Services Director will be tasked with foreseeable challenges and opportunities including:

- With a recent reorganization, the City of Palm Desert is establishing a one stop shop for its development functions. While initially working with a consultant for initial implementation, the next Director will have the opportunity to make optimizations on an ongoing basis to drive efficiency, including the implementation of ProjectDox and eTRAKiT for an enhanced web presence and improved digital services.
- Palm Desert is a high-standards city that continually strives to be the best in all that it does. The next Director will have the opportunity to be involved in highly innovative projects and ideas that are rarely seen in many cities.
- With a new Public Works Director also joining the City, there is a natural opportunity for the two departments to build strong collaborations between the City's two largest departments.
- The Development Services Department will be onboarding new staff to be assigned to the land review and entitlement process. The next Director will have the opportunity to mentor the new staff and senior staff alike.
- The next Development Services Director will enjoy working for a city management team that embraces change and supports continuous improvement. Innovations and other improvements to business practices will not only be supported but will be expected.

## The Ideal Candidate

The City of Palm Desert is a dynamic community that prides itself on a long history of civic involvement and a solution-oriented government. Specific traits and characteristics the next Development Services Director should include the following.

- The next Development Services Director will need to be an effective leader of staff in the Department, encouraging collaboration and teamwork. The next Director will be tasked with building a cohesive team culture where units work together seamlessly and build capacity.
- With a strong planning team already in place, the City is not opposed to candidates without a planning background and is extremely open to candidates who have strong leadership and management skills provided they have some familiarity with the development functions of a city.
- Candidates should be intrinsically motivated to continually improve their organizations and have a track record of success in this regard.
- Familiarity with one stop shops, particularly in methods to optimize and increase efficiencies across the development review process, would be of value.
- The Director should be able to create an environment with a focus on performance measurement, continuous improvement, and value. The ties between dollars and results should be well developed and broadcast widely. The Director should be able to create a culture of openness to information and confidence in the Department's performance.
- The City of Palm Desert has a history of innovation and creativity. The next Director should be willing to advance and encourage innovative and creative ideas for the betterment of the City.



## Experience and Education

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

**Education:** Equivalent to graduation from an accredited four-year college or university with major coursework in major coursework in urban planning, engineering, business administration, public administration, or a related field.

**Experience:** Seven years of increasingly responsible management and/or administrative experience in planning, engineering, or community development, or a closely related field.

## Compensation and Benefits

The salary range for the Community Services Director is **\$185,000 to \$195,000**, with placement in the range dependent on qualifications. In addition, an excellent executive benefit package as outlined below.

### Key Benefits Include:

- **Retirement:** CalPERS 2% @ 62 (employees pay 7% of salary for this benefit). Classic CalPERS members are eligible for the 2% @ 55 formula.
- **Retiree Health Savings Account:** 1% contribution that the City matches.
- **Medical Insurance:** IRC 125 cafeteria plan that includes CalPERS medical insurance (fully paid PPO and HMO options for employees and dependents).
- **Dental Insurance:** Fully paid in IRC 125 cafeteria plan.
- **Vision Insurance:** Fully paid in IRC 125 cafeteria plan.
- **Holidays:** 12 annual holidays.
- **Sick Leave:** 12 annual sick days.
- **Vacation:** A competitive number of days will be negotiated as part of overall benefit package days.
- **Administrative Leave:** 3 days.



- **Life Insurance:** Amount equal to annual salary.
- **Long Term Disability Insurance:** City paid long-term disability insurance.
- **Deferred Compensation:** A voluntary deferred compensation program—457 and 401a with 2% City Match to 401a.
- **Tuition Reimbursement:** An educational incentive program.
- **Employee Assistance Program:** City paid.
- **Ride-share program:** An alternative transportation incentive program.

## To Apply

This recruitment will be handled with strict confidentiality. References will not be contacted until mutual interest has been established. A preliminary closing date has been scheduled for **July 19, 2021**, however candidates are encouraged to apply early, as this recruitment will close once a sufficiently strong candidate pool has been established. To apply, email a compelling cover letter and comprehensive resume to [apply@ralphandersen.com](mailto:apply@ralphandersen.com).

Ralph Andersen & Associates will conduct the initial evaluation of submitted materials to determine the best overall match with the established criteria as outlined in this recruitment profile. The evaluation and selection process may consist of a supplemental questionnaire and/or written exercise(s) to further evaluate relative experience and overall suitability for this position. Confidential inquiries are welcomed to Greg Nelson at (916) 630-4900.



*The City of Palm Desert is an equal opportunity employer*