



ASSISTANT PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR - UTILITIES

Durango, Colorado

EXECUTIVE
RECRUITMENT
PROVIDED BY



THE COMMUNITY

Nestled in southwest Colorado's San Juan Mountains, at the crossroads of the Four Corners (where Colorado's border meets Arizona, Utah, and New Mexico), Durango is a charming mountain town where the sun shines more than 300 days each year. The city encompasses 17.01 square miles and has an altitude of 6,512 feet. With a population of 19,500, Durango acts as the county seat for La Plata County, which boasts 56,600 residents.

Durango offers multiple opportunities for outdoor adventure such as skiing, ziplining, hiking, mountain biking, fishing, camping, and cruising the Animas River Trail. The beauty of Durango and the nearby San Juan Mountains can be explored on the Durango and Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad and via the San Juan Skyway which wraps around the San Juan National Forest and is the gateway to many Colorado attractions.

Durango's historic, walkable downtown is full of shops, unique eateries, and a dynamic art scene, and there are countless recreational opportunities where the culture is as rich as the city's golden past.

Purgatory Resort, located 25 miles north of downtown, has 105 trails, 11 lifts, a vertical drop of over 2,000 feet, and more than 1,600 acres of skiable terrain. It was recently ranked among Conde Nast's "Best Ski Resorts in the U.S. and Canada: Readers' Choice Awards" list.

Durango has won numerous state and national awards for its unique tourism experiences; however, the locals will say that they have chosen to call Durango home for its quality of life. The most common reason for relocation from the "big city" to Durango is the warm welcome and the genuine sense of community within what is lovingly referred to as a "real Colorado town."

Durango enjoys an ideal four-season climate, and visitors come from near and far each season. The city's remote location at the junction of U.S. Highways 160 and 550 offers unimpeded access to some of the best cultural, historic, and outdoor attractions in Colorado, while the nearby airport makes traveling outside the city and state easily accessible. The Durango-La Plata County Airport is the primary regional airport for the area and is a City department. It is served by American Airlines and United Airlines, with year-round daily nonstop service available to Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW), Denver (DEN) and Phoenix (PHX), with seasonal nonstop service available to Houston (IAH).

Durango offers unparalleled access to the great outdoors, where recreational and leisure amenities include access to the Animas River Trail, Lake Nighthorse, a 71,557-square-foot recreation center, the San Juan National Forest, the San Juan Mountains, Mesa Verde National Park, and the Weminuche Wilderness. The dramatic landscapes surrounding Durango act as a beautiful backdrop to popular tourist stops like the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad & Roundhouse Museum, Durango Hot Springs Resort & Spa, and the Sky Ute Casino Resort, as well as the multiple arts and music festivals throughout the year, including the Iron Horse Bicycle Classic, Taste of Durango, Animals River Days, the Durango Bluegrass Meltdown, and the city's legendary Snowdown.



THE COMMUNITY, *continued*

Durango boasts one of the highest concentrations of top-ranked public schools in Colorado. A superior public school system, Durango School District 9-R serves pre-K through 12th grade students and consists of eight elementary schools, two middle schools, two high schools, an online option, and homeschool partnership with local school district. Residents also have local opportunities for higher education in San Juan College and Fort Lewis College.

The median household income in Durango is just over \$76,000, while homes are priced around \$760,000 on average.

MISSION, VISION, & VALUES

OUR MISSION

The City of Durango and our employees provide efficient city services, effectively maintain city assets and manage growth, are accountable, ethical and fiscally responsible, and collaborate with regional partners to improve the quality of life for our entire community.

OUR VISION

Durango is an authentic, diverse, multigenerational, and thriving community. Our residents value and enjoy our unique natural environment and benefit from the management of our city's resources in a fiscally responsible, environmental, and socially sustainable manner.

VALUES

Teamwork
Service
Respect
Professionalism

Dependability
Innovation
Well-Being



GOVERNANCE & ORGANIZATION

Durango is a home-rule city operating under the council-manager form of government. The City Council is comprised of five members elected at-large and serving four-year terms with no limits. In addition to appointing advisory and commission members and hiring the city manager, city attorney, and municipal judge, the City Council also elects a mayor from among its members to one-year terms of office.

The Durango City Council serves as the community's legislative and policy-making authority and selects a City Manager as the chief executive officer overseeing daily operations.

City Manager José R. Madrigal has over two decades of experience and joined the city in September 2020. He is responsible for the services provided by 429 full-time and 300 part-time employees, as well as the organization's finances. Durango's recently adopted 2024 budget totals \$114 million in anticipated revenues and approximately \$101 million in proposed capital expenditures.

ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS

- Financial Excellence & High Performance
- Affordability & Economic Opportunity
- Enhanced Livability & Sense of Place
- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
- Effective Infrastructure Network
- Environmental Sustainability & Resilience
- Engaged & Collaborative Governance



ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT

The Durango Public Works Department manages streets, water and wastewater infrastructure and operations, trash and recycling services, city engineering projects, and capital improvements construction management, all while remaining committed to public safety, customer service, and asset management.

With more than three dozen employees, the Utilities Division, in particular, is focused on the treatment, storage, and collection and distribution systems for water and sewer, along with capital improvement planning and design, ongoing maintenance, water rights planning and negotiations, and 24-hour on-call response to water and sewer system emergencies.

Division staff are dedicated to exceptional customer service, maintaining high-functioning infrastructure that supports the city's economy and the safety of all. They also work closely with City leaders and the Financial Advisory Board to provide recommendations for annual capital improvement projects, balancing the needs of Durango's utility systems with sustainability in the Water and Sewer enterprise funds.

DEPARTMENT MISSION & VISION

MISSION

Durango Public Works Department, through its dedicated team members, provides valuable city services and assets as it improves, manages, and maintains infrastructure to support a safe and environmentally focused community.

VISION

Peak performance of infrastructure and operations for enduring public good.





ABOUT THE POSITION

Under the direction of the Public Works Director, the new Assistant Public Works Director - Utilities will plan, guide, and direct operations and improvements focused on the department's Utilities Division.

The position is responsible for the Division's budget development and implementation, annual CIP recommendations, and 10-year asset management planning, as well as the supervision, training, direction, and evaluation of Division staff — including operational managers — with water, sewer, and collection/distribution operations specialties.

The selected candidate will also support the Public Works Director, serve as an interdepartmental liaison on division issues, manage projects, conduct research and analysis, develop policies, and coordinate activities, facilities, and programming — including marketing, presentations, special events, special projects, and public relations — with other Public Works and City staff.

Working through four direct reports, Utilities Engineer, Collections & Distributions Manager, Wastewater Treatment Plant Manager, and Water Treatment Plant Manager, this role's essential duties include:

- Participating in setting overall Division goals, resource allocation, and budget planning.
- Managing complex projects across the Division and facilitating the associated public review processes.
- Covering Division manager responsibilities, temporarily, in their absence and/or, temporarily, upon Director's directive, acting as the Public Works Director.
- Providing input, assisting the director in preparing and reviewing the department's budget, and ensuring consistency with City Council goals and objectives.
- Developing and preparing materials and data for the City Manager's Office, City Council, advisory boards, and customers.
- Establishing and maintaining cooperative working relationships throughout Public Works, City Departments, with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, representatives of other agencies, and the general public.
- Serving as a resource for Utilities staff and in cross-departmental efforts for policy analysis, process facilitation, problem-solving, and development review.
- Developing mutually respectful relationships with all levels of Utilities employees.
- Organizing, managing, and coordinating all Water and Wastewater activities, including the primarily outsourced planning, design and development of facilities.
- Providing leadership to the Division section managers, with support from Public Works Engineering and Capital Improvement Construction Management Divisions.

OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

The new Assistant Public Works Director - Utilities will join a team of committed water and sewer professionals and assist the division and the department at large in achieving its full potential.

This year, the department director is focused on improving organizational effectiveness by integrating needed staffing changes and concentrating on interdepartmental, divisional, and Public Works team cohesion and mutual support while implementing process improvements. As part of that focus, the selected candidate will be asked to:

- **Ensure Utilities Division services meet regulations and community needs**, managing the utilities while recommending and implementing policies and procedures and maintaining collaborative relationships with regulatory agencies and the public.
- **Provide strong leadership and problem-solving skills**, including analyzing complex issues, developing solutions, and implementing approved changes. This may include preparing reports and facilitating public review processes.
- **Maintain effective communication and relationships**, working effectively with staff, government representatives, external agencies, and the public, addressing concerns tactfully and courteously.
- **Continuously improve internal operations**, including assessing workload, administrative systems, and reporting structures, and identifying and recommending improvements to the Director of Public Works.
- **Engage in cultural change**, contributing to a division, department, and organization that effectively recruits and retains quality employees. Of 14 indicators of employee satisfaction surveyed, 13 have shown improvement in the last two years — and six of those are 10-35% improvements!

IDEAL CANDIDATE

The City of Durango is seeking an Assistant Public Works Director - Utilities with the skills and experience to guide the future of its Utilities Division by directing daily operations, strategic improvements, and long-term planning.

Policy development experience, knowledge of water and wastewater systems operations, and strong communication skills will be essential to the success of this new leadership role. In-depth understanding and awareness of current trends, technology, and projects in the water industries — and familiarity with relevant federal, state, and local laws, codes, and regulations affecting water and wastewater operations, particularly Colorado Water Rights — will also be beneficial.

Candidates should demonstrate project management, leadership, and organization skills, with the ability to manage multiple projects efficiently from inception to completion. Strong analytical skills with the capacity to assess problems, explore alternative solutions, predict the outcomes of proposed actions, and implement recommendations to achieve strategic objectives are a must.

The right fit for this role will feel comfortable establishing cooperative working relationships with external partners, including the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, government representatives, and the general public. They will also work effectively with staff at all levels of the organization.

City leaders are looking for someone skilled in leading, managing, and motivating their team — someone who understands the link between achieving divisional and organizational goals. The ideal candidate maintains composure in difficult or stressful situations and excels in identifying and addressing community concerns and needs, demonstrating responsiveness and effective communication.

EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE

This position requires a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in engineering, public administration, urban planning, environmental science, or a closely related field, with graduate-level coursework or a master's degree in public administration or a related field preferred.

Candidates should also have five (5) years of responsible supervisory and policy development experience in a municipal government, water/wastewater utility, or public works department, including supervisory experience managing a staff of over 20 in addition to contractors and consultants.

Any combination of education, training, and experience that provides the required knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform the position's duties and responsibilities will be considered.

COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

The City of Durango is offering a competitive salary range of \$91,299 to \$136,948 for this position, depending on qualifications and experience.

The organization's comprehensive benefits package includes medical, dental, vision, life, long-term disability, and AD&D insurance; 11 paid holidays and ample personal time; paid FMLA; a holistic Employee Wellness Program; and access to an Employee Assistance Program. It also includes volunteer program opportunities, flexible spending and health savings account options, a complimentary transit pass with discounted rates for family members, tuition reimbursement, longevity recognition programs and incentives, and free access to the Durango Community Recreation Center and Chapman Hill Ice Rink & Ski Area.

Durango offers a competitive 401(a) retirement plan, featuring a defined contribution of 9% from the employee and 11.2% from the City, and an optional 457(b) compensation plan.

APPLICATION PROCESS

[Please apply online](#)

For more information on this position, contact:

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The City of Durango is an Equal Opportunity Employer. They do not discriminate on the basis of age 40 and over, color, disability, gender identity, genetic information, military or veteran status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or any other applicable status protected by state or local law. It is the City's intention that all qualified applicants be given equal opportunity and that selection decisions are based on job-related factors. Applicants selected as finalists will be subject to a comprehensive background check.

RESOURCES

City of Durango
durangoco.gov

Public Works
durangoco.gov/1430/Public-Works-Divisions

Economic Development
yeslpc.com

Chamber of Commerce
durangobusiness.org

Strategic Plan
durangoco.gov/DocumentCenter/View/23920/2022-Strategic-Plan-

Comprehensive Plan
bit.ly/durangocomplan

Local CVB
durango.org
downtowndurango.org

