



DIRECTOR OF PLANNING

SWEETWATER, TX



THE COMMUNITY

Nestled in the heart of West Texas, the City of Sweetwater, with a population of approximately 11,000, lies 40 miles west of Abilene and 68 miles east of Big Spring along Interstate 20 with easy access to U.S. Highway 84 and State Highway 70. Sweetwater is the county seat of Nolan County and covers 11.07 square miles of Texas prairie. A small town rich in history, it boasts a strong quality of life, good schools, a wide variety of business opportunities, and a safe, friendly, and family-centered environment.

Sweetwater's strong economy consists primarily of manufacturing, agriculture, and energy. With some 500 giant wind turbines atop nearby Trent Mesa, it's also known as the Wind Energy Capital of North America. Significant community employers include Sweetwater ISD, Ludlum Measurements, USG, Wal-Mart, and the City of Sweetwater.

An 88-acre industrial park, occupied by three major oil and gas service companies, is located along Interstate 20, and a 75-acre Broadway Industrial Park was recently completed. Upcoming major industrial development projects include a \$300 million Georgia Pacific expansion that will add 120 new jobs and Hard Head Veterans, a ballistic helmet manufacturing company that will employ 60. New housing projects include the Southview Terrace subdivision with 25 lots, the Creekside subdivision with 94 lots, Sweetwater Station, a \$10 million investment with a 55-unit senior living facility, and the remodeling of The Oaks 80-unit apartment complex.

Proud of its rich history, the Sweetwater Airport is home to the National WASP WWII Museum, which tells the history of the Woman Airforce



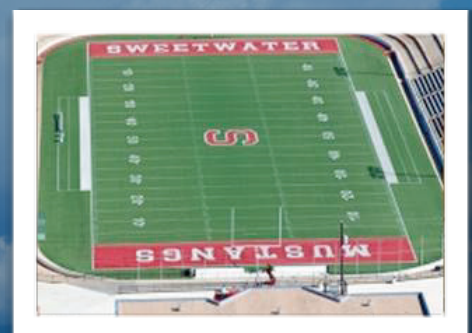


THE COMMUNITY, *continued*

Service Pilots (WASPs) and their role during World War II. A favorite annual West Texas event since 1958, Sweetwater Rattlesnake Roundup, the world's largest, is held the second weekend in March, drawing roughly 40,000 people to the area from around the world.

Mild weather with an annual average of 327 days of sunshine allows for plenty of opportunities to enjoy Sweetwater's two 18-hole golf courses, four public parks, dog park, city pool, splash pad, Sweetwater Lake, Santa Fe Lake, and Lake Trammell. Sweetwater offers a variety of shopping and entertainment sites, with additional entertainment venues in nearby Abilene, including The Paramount Theatre, Abilene Zoo, and Buffalo Gap Historic Village.

Rolling Plains Memorial Hospital provides local healthcare, while Texas State Technical College has a campus in Sweetwater. Sweetwater's median annual family income is \$45,500, and the median home list price is about \$149,500.



MISSION & VALUES

Mission:

We lead with trust and respect to provide a vibrant, secure community for all.

Values:

Professionalism

Integrity

Continuous Improvement

Teamwork



GOVERNANCE & ORGANIZATION

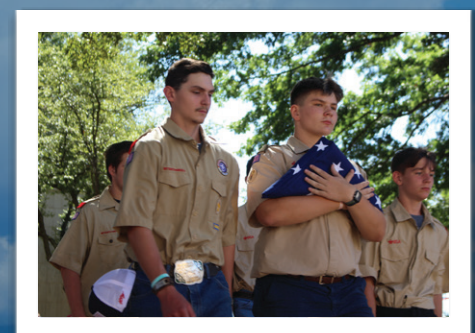
The City of Sweetwater operates as a home-rule city utilizing the council-manager form of government with a City Charter initially adopted in 1956 and updated in 2018. The governing body consists of a mayor and four council members who serve two-year terms with no term limits. Each council member represents a specific district, with the mayor elected at-large. The City Council appoints a professional City Manager to lead daily operations.

City Manager David A. Vela, ICMA-CM, has two decades of city management experience and joined the Sweetwater team in 2016. He leads the City's team of 140 full-time and 41 part-time employees and manages an annual budget of approximately \$43.7 million based in part upon the City's ad valorem property tax rate of \$0.5075 per \$100 of valuation.

COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS

As part of the 2022 Comprehensive Plan, the Sweetwater community developed a set of six aspirations with an action plan to work toward each in the years ahead. Those aspirations were to:

- Create a Robust Local Economy
- Invest in Children and Teens
- Involve and Engage Residents
- Offer Housing Choices for Everyone
- Expand Outdoor Amenities
- Revitalize Corridors and Occupy Vacancies



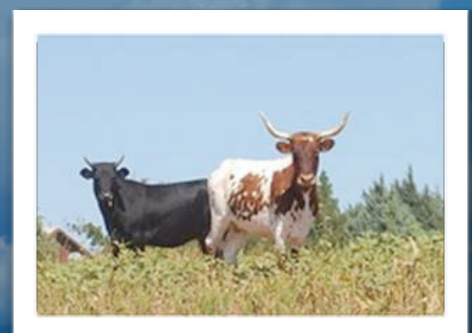
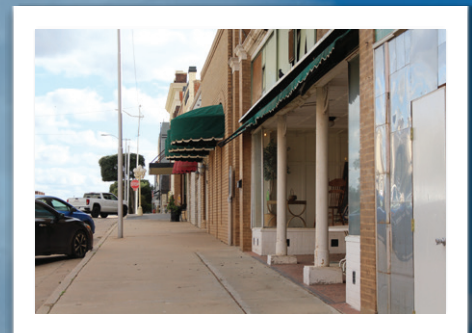
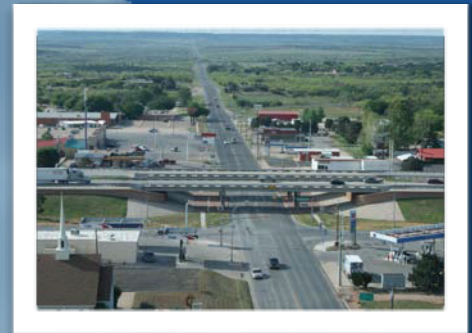


ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT

This role is new for the organization, taking on the Planning and Development Services Department. Planning and Development will include 3 full-time employees focused on a wide variety of amenities and projects, many stemming from goals set in the City's comprehensive plan.

Planning and Development Services is responsible for supervising and administering various codes to safeguard the public's life, health, and welfare and protect property. This includes construction plan review, permitting, inspections, annexations, code enforcement, floodplain management, and more.

The employees in these divisions will work closely with the City Council and the Planning & Zoning Commission, Board of Adjustments, Airport Zoning Board, and Cemetery Board.





ABOUT THE POSITION

Under the general direction of the city manager, the Director of Planning is responsible for providing overall supervision of planning and zoning, development, building inspections, and code enforcement activities.

This position will advise the city manager and City Council on planning- and development-related issues; enforce City ordinances and policies concerning zoning, building, construction, flood hazard prevention, and nuisances; oversee large-scale new development proposals and environmental studies; implement annexation plans; and ensure compliance with local, state, and federal law. It will also interpret City ordinances for department policy; assist developers, buildings, contractors, citizens, and utility companies in interpreting ordinances; plan, monitor, and evaluate the City's building inspection and code enforcement activities; and coordinate with local and state highway, fire, police, postal, and health authorities as needed. Currently working on zoning and land use re-write.

In addition to drafting, developing, and amending department ordinances, this role will prepare reports and maintain records, serve as the City's floodplain administrator and FEMA Credit Rating System Coordinator, and work alongside elected and appointed leaders, including providing administrative support to the Board of Adjustment, Planning & Zoning Commission, Airport Zoning Board, and Cemetery Board.

They will focus on quality of life, managing projects that impact residents' daily lives, such as transportation infrastructure and park amenities. Skills in short- and long-term planning will be critical for the position, as will experience developing realistic budgets and capital improvement plans with an eye for long-term sustainability.

As a department head, the successful candidate will additionally work on the annual operating budget, forecasting needs and monitoring expenditures; manage the staff within their divisions, promoting innovation and continuous improvement; and ensure department strategies align with City and community goals. These functions include making presentations as needed to community members and responding to citizen inquiries and concerns.



OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

City Council recently adopted Sweetwater’s first comprehensive plan, a significant accomplishment built upon the community’s vision for the future that will drive the organization’s strategies in the coming years.

The new Director of Planning will have a significant role in accomplishing the goals and objectives of the plan, focusing in their first year on communicating the plan’s intent and establishing the relationships throughout and beyond the community that will be necessary to bring its goals to fruition. The two out-years set in the plan will be more economic in nature.

The master plan is a 20-year living document set to be evaluated every three years, and the projects and initiatives it identified will help mold Sweetwater’s budgets and activities for the near future. The new director will be responsible for implementing the document’s action plan and tracking the City’s progress, taking a hands-on approach to projects in development, parks, and public works

The new director will also focus on prioritizing:

Capital Planning — The Sweetwater Municipal Airport is an underutilized community asset. The new director will be tasked with helping develop the airport and its operations to best serve the community and regional economy.

Code Enforcement — The successful candidate will provide oversight of renovation projects, demolition of dilapidated structures, and new activity within the community. That also means working closely with the City Council, Economic Development Board, developers, business owners, and residents.

Ordinance Review — City leaders are working to update the land development code and sign ordinance. These are outdated and must be revised to reflect the community’s development efforts.

Infrastructure Investments — Street expansion and repairs are a top concern to keep the community on track for future development and maintain resident quality of life, but a May 2021 bond election for streets did not pass. The next opportunity for a bond issue for roads will be the fall 2024 election, and work will begin in 2023 to identify projects and communicate those priorities to residents.

Department Organization — While settling into a new role for the organization, the new director will have the challenge and opportunity to build on the City’s current operations and staffing structure, recommending adjustments to improve efficiency and effectiveness. The right fit in this position may also have the opportunity for advancement.

Continuous Improvement — Ongoing operations of all City departments will need to be evaluated by a fresh set of eyes. The new director will work with the city manager and their fellow department heads to determine the most efficient methods to accomplish services provided to Sweetwater residents.

IDEAL CANDIDATE

The City of Sweetwater is seeking a skilled, deliberate leader with the experience and vision necessary to help guide the community forward, using the recently adopted comprehensive plan as a foundation.

The right fit for this position will have a solid understanding of community planning and municipal operations, including housing, zoning, historic preservation, code enforcement, park amenities, project management, and economic development, as well as budget and capital improvement plan development. They will also be a strong communicator who is comfortable crafting and presenting plans, project, ordinances, and initiatives, earning buy-in from — and encouraging consensus among — key stakeholders. Committed to customer service, the new director will know how to assess current operations and make changes that serve staff and residents alike, fostering innovation and a shared sense of purpose.

The ideal candidate will have a calm, can-do attitude and reflect the City's values of professionalism, integrity, continuous improvement, and teamwork. They will have experience working in a smaller community with an understanding of the pace of growth and change as they take a deliberate and assertive approach to their work while providing support, structure and organization to their team and projects.

EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE

This position requires a bachelor's degree in urban planning, or closely related field, with a master's degree in urban planning or public administration preferred. Candidates should have at least five years of municipal planning experience, including two as a manager. Ten or more years of experience — and experience with building services and code enforcement — would be a plus.

American Planning Association credentials are preferred, as is certification through the American Institute of Certified Planners. If the selected candidate is not already certified, City leaders would like to see them attain that certification within two years of hire.

COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

The City of Sweetwater is offering a starting salary range of up to \$125,000 annually for this position, commensurate with experience and qualifications. The organization's benefits package includes paid group health and life insurance, optional vision and dental coverage, paid holidays, and vacation and sick leave. This position will also have a City-provided cell phone.

Sweetwater participates in the Texas Municipal Retirement System, with an employee contribution rate of 7% and an employer 2:1 match, 5-year vesting, and retirement eligibility with 20 years of service.

Please note that residency is not required for this position, but it is preferred.

APPLICATION PROCESS

[Please apply online](#)

For more information on this position, contact:

Larry Bell, Senior Vice President

LarryBell@GovernmentResource.com

325-669-3671



The City of Sweetwater is an Equal Opportunity Employer and values diversity in its workforce. Applicants selected as finalists will be subject to a comprehensive background check.

RESOURCES

City of Sweetwater

sweetwatertx.gov

Planning & Development Services

sweetwatertx.gov/departments/finance-department

Utility Billing & Collections Department

sweetwatertx.gov/departments/planning-and-development-services

Economic Development

sweetwatertexas.net

Sweetwater Comprehensive Plan

sweetwatertx.gov/communications/ignite-sweetwater

Sweetwater Chamber of Commerce

sweetwatertexas.org

Sweetwater ISD

sweetwaterisd.net

