



MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Mayor & Town Council

FROM: India Adams-Jacobs, Town Manager/Clerk

COPY: Jeff Gore, Town Attorney

DATE: April 2, 2026

RE: Authorization to Contract Senior Planner to fill the Vacancy of Director of Community Development Position for the Remainder of FY26 and FY27

BACKGROUND

This memo requests Council authorization for the Town Manager to engage a contracted Senior Planner to address critical planning deadlines and respond to increasing development interest in the Town of Bowling Green. The Town faces concurrent obligations that exceed current staff capacity and require specialized expertise to ensure compliance and capitalize on growth opportunities.

The Town is currently facing four (4) converging demands that require immediate professional planning attention:

1. **Comprehensive Plan Update:** Virginia Code § 15.2-2230 requires localities to review their comprehensive plans at least once every five years. Our current plan requires updating to reflect recent changes in state code, development patterns, infrastructure improvements, and community goals.
2. **Corrective Action Plan Requirements:** The Town must develop and implement corrective action plans addressing specific regulatory compliance issues, requiring detailed technical analysis and implementation strategies by February 2027.
3. **Code Enforcement:** The Town has experienced increased code enforcement complaints since 2025, requiring extensive case review and notification requirements. To ensure proper adherence to state code and our local ordinance, as well as obtaining compliance, thorough investigations, informed code interpretations, and proper issuance of notices of violation, are best handled by land use professionals. Future matters may also require processes to be brought before the Board of Zoning Appeals; current staffing levels have no capacity for this potential additional workload.
4. **Development Activity:** The Town has experienced increased inquiries from developers and businesses seeking to locate within our jurisdiction, requiring timely review, guidance, and coordination with existing planning frameworks. State code amendments effective July 1, 2025, set specific, shortened timelines for development plan reviews that current staffing would be unable to meet.

This function was vacated by the prior Director of Community Development, who vacated this position in May 2024. The Town Manager has attempted to recruit for several months without finding a viable candidate, given the salary range. Due to the inability to secure a permanent full-time employee, it is in the town's best interest to contract these services to obtain the dedicated professional staffing needed to meet the mandated requirements of items 1, 2 and 4 mentioned above.

A contracted Senior Planner offers several advantages over attempting to address these needs with existing resources:

Specialized Expertise: Senior-level planners bring specific experience in comprehensive plan development, corrective action plan implementation, and development review processes that may not exist within current staff.

Timeline Management: Contracted professionals can dedicate focused attention to project deadlines without competing operational demands, ensuring compliance with state requirements and timely response to development inquiries.

Cost-Effectiveness: Engaging a contractor for a defined scope and duration offers greater fiscal flexibility than adding permanent positions. The Town avoids long-term salary commitments, benefits packages, and overhead costs while addressing immediate needs.

Objective Analysis: An external professional can provide an unbiased assessment of current planning documents and processes, offering a fresh perspective and best practices from their experience and as vetted in other jurisdictions.

Knowledge Transfer: A contracted senior planner can work alongside existing staff to build internal knowledge and capacity and implement improved processes for future planning activities.

ALTERNATIVES

The Town Council could request that the position be re-advertised with a higher salary range than previously discussed with the Town Manager.

Based on current market research, the Senior Planner rates in Virginia for a full-time equivalent range from \$88,000 to \$93,000. This proposed contract rate is not estimated to exceed \$60,000 for one year.

DRAFT MOTION

I am moving to authorize the Town Manager to procure Senior Planner services through the Berkley Group for a period of 1 year, commencing April 15, 2026, and ending April 15, 2027, for an amount not to exceed \$60,000.