

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my interest in the Community and Economic Development Director position at the City of Lathrup Village, as advertised on the Michigan Municipal League job board. With a comprehensive background in public sector program management and a commitment to fostering community growth, I am excited about the opportunity to contribute to the continued advancement of Lathrup Village. My skills in regulatory compliance monitoring, partnership development, and public policy implementation make me well-equipped to handle the diverse challenges associated with the position.

In my current role as Assistant Community and Economic Development Manager with the City of Hamtramck this time has equipped me with invaluable experience in evaluating site plans, zoning administration, and presenting information to local regulatory bodies. I have demonstrated success in identifying and implementing best practices in city planning and rehabilitation, aligning projects with zoning ordinances and community goals. This past winter I participated in the Michigan Economic Development Corporation's *Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) Virtual Academy* for local officials.

At the Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART), I managed federally regulated programs, requiring me to collaborate with both local and federal government agencies, and coached small businesses on government contracting. My ability to navigate complex regulatory landscapes and implement policies effectively were instrumental in driving program success. As a Grant Analyst at SMART, it equipped me with the skills to secure funding for projects and manage grant administration efficiently.

While earning a Bachelor of Science in Urban and Regional Planning from Michigan State University I was fortunate enough to travel with MSU's School of Planning, Design, and Construction to both Europe and Asia, to visit and learn onsite about cities at different stages of growth. We met with local planners and developers providing us with a greater insight into successful economic development strategies. My educational background, coupled with my hands-on experience in municipal administration, positions me well to contribute to the strategic goals and objectives of Lathrup Village.

Thank you for considering my application. I am eager to further discuss how my skills and experiences align with the needs of the Community and Economic Development Director role.

Austin Colson



AUSTIN COLSON

Detroit, Michigan

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Experienced Public Sector Program Manager who is skilled at bringing together all aspects of federally funded programs to generate **connected value creation**. Federally funded programs are often burdened by regulatory requirements and require multiple partners to deliver and meet goals. Driving cross-program alignment and compliance is where I excel. This requires a foundational knowledge of how grant programs work, bringing together diverse stakeholders against a common goal and managing projects for on-time, on-budget delivery. Understanding and implementing public policy is my specialty.

SKILLS

- Regulatory Compliance Monitoring
- Sourcing Public Funding
- GIS
- Public Policy Implementation
- Partnership Development/Management
- Problem Solving

EXPERIENCE

Assistant Community and Economic Development (CED)/DDA Manager

July 2023 - Present

City of Hamtramck

- Evaluate residential, commercial, and industrial site plans based on city zoning ordinance and Michigan Planning Enabling Act.
- Zoning administrator for commercial, residential, and industrial stakeholders.
- Presents applications and develop supporting documents for Zoning Board of Appeals and Planning Commission.
- Identify and utilize best practices in city planning and rehabilitation.

Supervisor/Safety Officer

July 2022 – July 2023

Emerald Mountain Labs

- Understanding of economic development would not be complete without private sector experience gained during this chapter.
- Learning the beginning stages of a start-up by working alongside managing partners.

Civil Rights & External Drug and Alcohol Programs Manager

January 2019 – February 2022

DBE/EEO & External Drug and Alcohol Programs Coordinator

March 2014 – January 2019

Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART) | Metro Detroit, MI

- Managed three (3) public programs mandated by federal regulations.
- Accomplished at engaging with federal and state agencies to ensure programs meet regulatory requirements.
- Coached small and disadvantaged businesses on government contracting process.
- Successful track-record at policy implementation through a stage gate approach including: 1) defining the policymakers' intent, 2) establish internal policies/procedures, 3) keeping current on regulatory updates, and 4) delivering on project objectives.
- Adept at contract reviews and revising internal SOPs to drive regulatory compliance.

Board Member City of Ferndale – Board of Zoning Appeal <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interpret unclear provisions of the city's land use and zoning ordinances.• Review applications for variances of existing ordinances submitted by residential property and business owners.	June 2017 - August 2023
Grant Analyst Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART) Metro Detroit, MI <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Served as liaison for federal, state, local agencies, and internally for grants.• Coordinated with numerous internal departments to develop SMART's applications for federal and state grant funding.• Applied and was awarded competitive grant from U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.	January 2012 - March 2014

EDUCATION

Masters - Public Administration Wayne State University, Detroit, MI <i>Concentration in Economic Development</i> Course work in GIS	December 2021
Bachelor of Science - Urban and Regional Planning Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI <i>Specialization in Environmental Economics</i>	May 2011