

Peckham & McKenney
“All about fit”



**Community and Economic
Development Director**
CITY OF EAST PALO ALTO, CALIFORNIA

The Community

The City of East Palo Alto has a population of approximately 30,000 residents and is located in the heart of Silicon Valley bordering the San Francisco Bay. The community has easy access to all three major Bay Area airports - San Francisco, San Jose, and Oakland – as well as the Dumbarton Bridge. East Palo Alto is a very desirable and diverse community that is fortunate to be a part of the booming Silicon Valley economy, which has added numerous jobs in the San Francisco-San Mateo-San Jose metro region. As a result, East Palo Alto's unemployment rate has consistently declined.

Within and surrounding the City's boundaries are iconic companies like Amazon, Facebook, Apple, and Google as well as one of world's top universities - Stanford. The area's incredibly diverse population, economic vitality, and idyllic climate make it one of the most sought-after areas to reside in the country. East Palo Alto has a rich history of community self-determination since its relatively recent incorporation in 1983. A hard-working community spirit and a can-do ethos have allowed the City to create economic development opportunities such as an IKEA and a Four Seasons Hotel, initially believed by some to be unachievable for East Palo Alto. All the while, the City has retained its unique



sense of identity as a socially conscious and engaged collection of neighbors and activists. Residents share their input freely on issues and their appreciation of the City's leaders is evident. Together, the community has accomplished an extraordinary transition. The City now benefits from low crime rates, improved infrastructure facilities, and a healthy economy.

The Organization

East Palo Alto is a General Law Council / Manager City governed by a five-member City Council with a Council-elected Mayor. In addition to the seven executive staff members leading the internal departments, the City partners with the Menlo Park Fire Protection District, Veolia North America (water company), and recently annexed into the City, the East Palo Alto Sanitary District to meet its residents' needs.

The City has five departments including: City Manager, Community and Economic

Development, Finance, Police and Public Works. The City's **2025–26 Budget** includes \$63 million in expenditures and \$77.4 million in projected revenues, resulting in a net surplus of \$14.4 million. The City is staffed with 125.95 full time equivalent positions.

The Ravenswood Business District/4-Corners Specific Plan

(adopted 12/17/2024) outlines how a 206-acre area of the City can be transformed into thriving mixed-use districts that provide places to live, employment opportunities, parks and open spaces, transportation enhancements, and sea level rise protection with up to 3.5 million square feet of development capacity. The City recently adopted an **Economic Development Strategic Plan** to provide long-term roadmap to guide how the City will strengthen the local economy, support small businesses, create job opportunities, and prepare key areas for future investment over the next 10 years.

The Department

The Community and Economic Development Department seeks to make East Palo Alto a wonderful place to live, work, and play. The Department accomplishes this through effective current and long-range municipal planning, permit approval, housing management, rent stabilization, code compliance, and economic development. The Department's **FY 2025-2026 operating budget** is \$7.15 million with 20 full-time employees.

The Community and Economic Development Department consists of five divisions: Administration, Building (including Code Enforcement), Planning, Rent Stabilization, and Housing/Economic Development. The Department is responsible for a wide range of functions including:

- Coordinating and managing the City's development related functions (e.g., planning entitlement and permit processing; long range planning and development review; inspection



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services; assisting the production, preservation, and protections of affordable housing; and supporting compliance with the Building Code through enforcement);

- Coordinating business development and retention efforts through both capital projects and direct economic development efforts;
- Administer the rent stabilization program, including staffing the Rent Board;
- Providing staff support to the Planning Commission and Rent Stabilization Board;



- Enforce State and local regulatory laws; and
- Collaborating with regional organizations (e.g. County Collaborative: 21 Elements, City/County Association of Governments (C/CAG), Metropolitan Transportation Committee (MTC), the South Bayside Waste Management Authority and the San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority).

The Position

The Community and Economic Development Director plans, organizes, manages, and provides direction and oversight for all functions and activities of the Community and Economic Development Department; directs and administers the planning and building operations activities of the

City, which include current, advance, and environmental planning, building plan check, permitting, inspection, and historic preservation activities; coordinates assigned activities with other City departments, officials, outside agencies, and the public; fosters cooperative working relationships among City departments and with intergovernmental and regulatory agencies, various public and private groups, and works with developers and homeowners; provides highly responsible and complex professional assistance to the City Manager in areas of expertise; and performs related duties, as assigned.

Ideal Candidate

This is an exciting time to serve the East Palo Alto community! The City Manager is seeking an innovative and collaborative leader who is ready to take both the City and his or her career to the next level. This is a hands-on leadership role best suited for a professional with a strong foundation in planning, building, or economic development.

The ideal candidate is flexible, nimble, and able to adapt to shifting priorities in a dynamic political environment. They exercise sound professional judgment, especially when navigating politically sensitive or high-profile issues, and provide well-reasoned, objective recommendations grounded in best practices and free from personal or political bias. They demonstrate cultural humility, an inclusive mindset, and sensitivity to multicultural environments and the diverse needs of the City's residents.

They will possess the qualities essential for effective leadership, including empathy, decisiveness, integrity, emotional intelligence,

resilience, and strong communication and listening skills. They lead by example, inspiring and empowering others while maintaining a high level of accountability and self-awareness.

A commitment to continuous improvement, both personally and organizationally, is essential. The ideal candidate is an approachable and empathetic leader who remains actively engaged with their team, fostering a positive and inclusive workplace culture while prioritizing staff growth and development. They establish clear expectations, promote accountability, and focus on achieving efficient, results-driven outcomes. This individual is comfortable addressing challenges directly and engaging in difficult conversations when necessary. Above all, we are seeking a strong, people-centered leader—not simply a technical expert.

A strong track record of community engagement is required, ideally including experience working with economically and culturally diverse populations. The successful candidate understands and utilizes both traditional and non-traditional outreach strategies to effectively engage the community. A genuine commitment to public service is core to their leadership style, fostering trust, transparency, and collaboration throughout the organization and with external stakeholders.

The Community and Economic Development Director will lead the Department in advancing its mission, vision, strategic goals. This includes aligning departmental priorities with City Council priorities and translating policy objectives into actionable plans.



Search Schedule

Filing Deadline: May 3, 2026

Preliminary Interviews (telephonic): May 11 & 12, 2026

Recommendation to City: May 21, 2026

Panel Interviews (In-Person): June 2, 2026

Finalist Interviews (In-Person): June 3, 2026

These dates have been confirmed, and it is recommended that you plan your calendar accordingly.

The ideal candidate is comfortable operating in a complex and dynamic policy environment, where development matters often attract significant interest. A natural problem solver, the ideal candidate approaches challenges with clarity and confidence, resolving issues promptly and thoughtfully.

Education and Experience:

Requires any combination of training and experience equivalent to a bachelor's degree in one or more of the following: Land-Use Planning, Urban Planning, Engineering, Public Administration, Business Administration, Community Development, or a closely related field and seven (7) years of management experience in community development, economic development, redevelopment, or civil engineering with urban planning. Must possess a valid California Class C Driver's License and a good driving record, at the time of appointment.

Compensation and Benefits

The annual salary range for this at-will position is \$197,397 - \$249,509. The final salary will be commensurate with experience, education, skills, and background.

The City offers an attractive benefits package, including:

CALPERS RETIREMENT: Classic Members - 2.5% @ 55 formula. Employee pays 8% employee contribution. New Members—2% @ 62 formula. Employee

pays 6.75% employee contribution.

HEALTH BENEFITS: For medical coverage, the City contracts with Sutter Health and Kaiser Permanente. The City pays 100% employee only Kaiser Coverage and 65% Dependent Coverage up to the Kaiser Coverage Plan. If enrolled into a Kaiser Medical HSA Plan, the City will contribute \$2,000 annually into a health savings account prorated to month of hire.

DELTA DENTAL INSURANCE: The City pays full cost for employees.

VSP VISION: Supplemental Insurance through VSP is employee paid.

LONG TERM DISABILITY: City paid.

LIFE INSURANCE: The City pays for coverage of term policy in the amount of \$150,000

PAID TIME OFF:

- **Vacation:** Accrual ranges from 80 – 200 hours per year based on years of continuous service with the City.
- **Sick Leave:** 8 hours per month.

- **Holidays:** 13 Paid Holidays per year
- **Management Leave:** up to seventy-six (76) hours of Management Leave annually prorated to date of hire.

CAR ALLOWANCE: \$200/month

The City of East Palo Alto is an equal opportunity employer.

Mission Statement

The City of East Palo Alto provides responsive, respectful, and efficient public services to enhance the quality of life and safety for its multi-cultural community.

The Recruitment Process

To apply for this key position and exciting career opportunity, please submit a current resume with month and year of employment and compelling cover letter through our website at:

Peckham & McKenney
www.PeckhamAndMcKenney.com

Resumes are acknowledged within two business days. Contact Roberta Greathouse at 831.998.3194, toll-free at 866.912.1919, or via email to Roberta@PeckhamandMcKenney.com if you have any questions regarding this position or the recruitment process.

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