

Thornton, Colorado

Planning and Economic Development
Director Recruitment



sashc
Product That W

14802

Executive Recruitment Provided by



THORNTON
COLORADO



Deja Foods

Deja Foods
Carmen

Deja Foods
Carmen

Deja Foods

Jennifer
Vice President

Deja Foods
Kaitlyn



City Profile

Thornton is the 6th largest city in Colorado and benefits from its proximity to downtown Denver, Denver International Airport, and the foothills of the beautiful Rocky Mountains. Thornton has a diverse population of just over 153,000 people and is expected to grow by another 90,000 people in the next 30 years. The City has diverse neighborhood choices that offer both established neighborhoods and newer development.

While early development in Thornton was primarily residential, it has become a destination for primary employers and regional retail. The City hosts three Regional Transportation District commuter rail stations with two additional stations planned further north. The City's Comprehensive Plan, recent development code update and several key projects will invite greater density and additional mixed uses to build on Thornton's already high quality of life.

Today, Thornton continues moving forward in a responsible manner that strengthens Thornton's increasing footprint. This includes the City's responsiveness to growth with an ever-growing menu of city services, programs, and capital investments.

Form of Government

Thornton is a home rule city operating under a Council - Manager form of government. The City Council consists of the Mayor who is elected at large, and eight Council Members, two elected from each of the city's four wards. The Mayor and Council each serve four-year terms, and all have an equal vote. The City Council enacts ordinances, approves the City budget, and appoints the City Manager, City Attorney, and Municipal Judge. The City Manager administers the daily operations and programs of the City through the department heads, other staff members, and employees.

The current City Manager was appointed to her role in October of 2024. The Planning and Economic Development Director will report to a newly created Assistant City Manager for Quality of Life and Development along with the Parks and Recreation and Community Programs Departments. With the new director will come a consolidation of the Planning and development services department with the Office of Economic Development to create the new, more comprehensive department.



Recent Department Accomplishments

- Adopted new Development Code, modernizing and improving zoning and land use standards to facilitate innovative and high-quality development.
- Implemented Rapid Review processes for selecting homeowner-initiated building permits
- Created new processes allowing online submittals for applicants for Temporary Use Permits, Driveways, Artificial Turf, and Pre-application meetings through the CityView portal.
- Engaged a planning consultant to implement a Housing Choice code to encourage and facilitate the delivery of more affordable and attainable housing in the city. The project kicked off in early September and will include robust engagement with Council, the Thornton community, and other stakeholders. Code adoption adopted in Q1 2026.
- In collaboration with Economic Development, expedited reviews for priority projects for faster approval and construction of commercial projects and businesses.
- Implemented new policies to encourage faster reviews and high-quality submittals.
- Expanded and continued implementation of Building Inspection Division Ambassador for each residential project and significant non-residential projects.



Strategic Departmental Priorities

The work of the Planning and Economic Development Department is central and visible in the City's recently adopted strategic plan. One of the city's four strategic goals is to create Vibrant and Purposeful Development by Actively pursue mixed-use and walkable development and redevelopment that include diverse housing choices. Attract commercial development with appealing amenities and economic opportunities that offer destinations for the community and visitors. Maintain inviting public spaces and facilities to inspire community pride and enjoyment.

While work plans for the fifteen related actions are currently underway, several key initiatives are ongoing or upcoming including:

- Updates to station area master plans for the RTD N Line that provides transit through Thornton
- Redevelopment of Marketplace at 88th shopping Center
- Land Development Code updates
- Development review process improvement updates
- Efforts around place making and public gathering spaces
- Diversification of housing
- Evaluation of city owned property to determine future development potential



Community and Department Feedback

The City of Thornton completed a third-party Citizen Satisfaction survey in late 2025.

63% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the appearance of their neighborhood. Areas of opportunity include variety of stores, restaurants and shopping centers, and condition of streets and traffic flow.

Position Profile

The Director of Planning and Economic Development leads, directs, and manages the planning, development review, and business support activities to create sustainable growth with robust community engagement. Provides strategic leadership to link long range planning with purposeful development to create a vibrant community. Implements the approved strategic workplan and addresses the city priorities through thoughtful leadership and policies.

The Director and members of the Planning and Economic Development Team work with other departments to strengthen the City's capacity to engage residents and developers in meaningful ways across all City programs.

The successful candidate will also demonstrate strengths to include:

- Directing and managing all activities and operations of the department, including development and plan review, city planning, building permits, building inspection, development engineering, and the Office of Economic Development.
- Developing and implementing strategies to link land-use, housing, and business development with art, transportation, parks, and community programs.
- Ensuring robust community engagement and stakeholder involvement to foster collaborative growth and purposeful development. Identifies opportunities for creative, equitable, and sustainable development. Assesses local needs and updates the strategic plan for the future of the department, the city, and the community. Analyzes problems, identifies alternative solutions, projects consequences of proposed actions, and implements recommendations in support of goals and provides excellent customer service.
- Strong financial and compliance experience includes development and management of the department budget and ability to work across various funding sources.
- Strong personnel and management skills to include hiring, development, discipline, termination or advancement of employees.

Education and Experience

Bachelor's degree in planning or related field from an accredited college or university; eight years' management level experience in community development or related field, including five years of supervisory experience. Equivalent combinations of education and experience may be considered. American Institute of Certified Planners designation is preferred. Local government experience referred.

The candidate will have successfully served in or will demonstrate strong familiarity with the Council-Manager form of government. Successful candidates will also have a proven record of leadership, fiscal stewardship, innovation, and relationship-building.

Compensation and Benefits

The City of Thornton offers a competitive salary range of \$182,914 - \$241,446 annually commensurate with the successful candidate's qualifications and experience. The City provides a comprehensive benefits package to support employees through important events in their life, to enhance their life outside work, and to help them plan and prepare for the future.

Application and Selection Process

[Apply Here](#)



This position will accept applications until August 3, 2026.

For more information on this position, contact:

Marsha Reed, Senior Vice President, Executive Recruitment

marshareed@governmentresource.com | 806-789-9641

The City of Thornton is an Equal Opportunity Employer and values diversity in its workforce. Applicants selected as finalists for this position will be subject to a comprehensive background check. The selected candidate must pass a preemployment drug screening and/or post-offer physical examination, and secure a valid Driver's License within a reasonable period following appointment.





14802



THORNTON
COLORADO