



REGIONAL PLANNER (HOUSING AND DOWNTOWN SPECIALIST)

POSITION SUMMARY AND ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

The Northwest Hills Council of Governments (NHCOC) is the coordinating body for Chief Elected Officials of twenty-one (21) municipalities in the northwest corner of Connecticut. NHCOC provides advisory services and assistance in regional and transportation planning, environmental management, emergency preparedness, economic development, and municipal shared services to the region.

The Regional Planner supports regional and municipal planning initiatives with a primary focus on housing policy, land use, zoning, and the planning, revitalization, and management of village centers, downtowns, and mixed-use districts. The position assists member municipalities in advancing housing choice, economic vitality, and place-based development consistent with Connecticut General Statutes, regional plans, and state policy guidance.

The Regional Planner works collaboratively with municipalities, regional partners, and state agencies to support statutory planning requirements, data-driven decision-making, and coordinated approaches to housing and municipal center development. The position emphasizes planning, technical assistance, policy analysis, and public engagement.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED

Works under the general supervision of the Director of Community and Economic Development. Exercises considerable initiative and independent judgment within the assigned areas of responsibility.

ESSENTIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Regional & Municipal Planning

- Support the preparation, implementation, and updates of regional plans, studies, and initiatives related to housing, land use, and Main Street / village center development.
- Assist municipalities with planning efforts that support compact, walkable, mixed-use village centers and neighborhood-scale development.
- Support municipal compliance with applicable Connecticut General Statutes related to planning, housing, and land use, including coordination with state guidance.

Housing Planning & Policy

- Conduct housing needs assessments, housing market analyses, and demographic research to inform regional and municipal planning efforts.
- Assist in the development, implementation and maintenance of regional housing plans and related planning tools.

- Research and evaluate housing policies, zoning regulations, and permitting practices to identify opportunities to increase housing choice, affordability, and production throughout the region.
- Support municipalities in aligning local plans, zoning regulations, and housing strategies with regional housing objectives.

Village Center & Downtown Planning

- Support planning initiatives focused on the revitalization and long-term sustainability of village centers, downtowns, and main streets.
- Assist municipalities and local partners in applying place-based planning principles that integrate housing, economic vitality, historic character, and public realm improvements.
- Contribute planning expertise related to downtown design, mixed-use development, adaptive reuse, and small-area planning.
- Work with local Boards / Working Groups to help implement the CT Main Street Four Point Approach (Design, Economic Vitality, Organization, and Promotion) to Main Street Management, as applied in a regional and municipal planning context.
- While Housing Planning and Main Street Planning and Management will each have separate and distinct tasks, as stated above, there is significant overlap between housing and downtown planning, especially in our rural region. Some of those areas of overlap include Land Use, Zoning & Development Analysis; Data, Mapping & Reporting; and Public Engagement and Coordination as further described below

Land Use, Zoning & Development Analysis

- Analyze land use patterns, zoning regulations, and development capacity in downtowns, village centers, corridors, and transit-accessible areas.
- Assist with the development of zoning concepts, best practices, and model approaches that support mixed-use development, housing diversity, and context-sensitive design.
- Support municipalities in evaluating regulatory barriers and opportunities related to housing and municipal center development.

Public Engagement & Coordination

- Support public engagement activities related to housing and village center/downtown planning, including workshops, charrettes, public meetings, and training sessions.
- Prepare and present planning materials to municipal boards and commissions, elected officials, business stakeholders, and community organizations.
- Coordinate with transportation, economic development, municipal services, and other regional planning staff to integrate housing and municipal center development with mobility, infrastructure, and community goals.
- Assist municipalities and local partners in identifying and pursuing relevant state and federal planning, housing, and community development resources.

The Executive Director and/or Director of Community and Economic Development may reassign work responsibilities at any time to meet the needs of the agency.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITY

- Knowledge of planning principles related to housing, land use, zoning, and village centers or downtown development.

- Familiarity with current Connecticut municipal planning processes and land use statutes (or demonstrated ability to acquire them quickly).
- Understanding of economic vitality, historic preservation, and place-based development principles as applied through planning.
- Strong research, analytical, writing, and presentation skills.
- Ability to translate planning and policy concepts into clear guidance for municipal officials and community stakeholders.
- Experience supporting public engagement and collaborative planning processes.
- Ability to manage multiple assignments and work collaboratively in an interdisciplinary environment.
- GIS and data visualization skills are beneficial but not required.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS, EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING

Education

- Bachelor's degree (BS) in urban or regional planning, public policy, geography, architecture, community development, or a related field.
- Master's degree (MS) and/or AICP certification preferred.
- Equivalent education and experience may be considered.

Experience

- Professional planning experience related to housing, land use, zoning, downtown or village center planning, community development, or regional planning.
- Experience working with municipalities, regional organizations, or community-based partners is preferred.

CERTIFICATES AND LICENSES

- Current valid Driver's License
- AICP Preferred or ability to obtain certification within 5 years.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

This is a full-time position (35 hours) involving office-based planning work (Litchfield,CT), frequent virtual meetings, field work and evening meetings. Local travel within the region is required. A hybrid and flexible work arrangement is available in accordance with organizational policy

SALARY AND FRINGE

Market competitive and based on experience and qualifications. The anticipated salary range is \$75,000–\$85,000, and the organization **may consider compensation above this range for exceptionally well-qualified candidates**. NHCOC offers an excellent fringe benefit package, flexible hours, and remote work policy.

The Northwest Hills Council of Governments (NHCOC) provides equal employment opportunities (EEO) and prohibits unlawful discrimination and harassment, with respect to all employees and applicants for employment, including but not limited to, age, ethnicity, ancestry, gender, national origin, disability, race, size, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, or any other status prohibited by applicable law.