



FLATHEAD COUNTY, MONTANA

# Planning Director

**Mission:**

*"The Flathead County Planning & Zoning Office is committed to providing the highest level of planning services. We will accomplish this through employees who anticipate public needs, and promote a work environment that encourages creativity, communication and cooperation. The office will also encourage professional development and training for all staff members."*



## Flathead County Opportunity!

“The Flathead,” as locals call the valley, lies just west of the Continental Divide in northwest Montana. Here you will find the gateway to Glacier National Park, and the home of both Whitefish Mountain Resort and Blacktail Ski Area, eight golf courses, and Hungry Horse Reservoir. With the abundance of recreational opportunities and aesthetic values, it is not hard to see why Flathead County is among the fastest growing, and the third most populated county in Montana. Flathead Lake, the largest natural freshwater lake west of the Mississippi, is also among the cleanest large lakes – perfect for sailing, cruising, swimming, and fishing. A surprisingly mild climate invites you outside all year. Typical winter temperatures are in the 20s and 30s. Summer temperatures usually range from the 70s to low 90s.

With a population of just over 100,000 in 2019, you will find Flathead County has everything you need in an absolutely stunning natural environment. There are three incorporated cities in the County. The largest, Kalispell, has a population of approximately 20,000. Two additional major municipalities include Whitefish, with a population of 6,357, and Columbia Falls, with a population of 4,688. The population countywide is estimated to have grown in the last year to approximately 110,000-120,000. Over 65% of the population lives in unincorporated, un-zoned county land.

Attraction development has greatly increased in recent years contributing to the influx of tourists and tourism-based services. Flathead County’s population increases by 40% during the months of June through August due to tourism

To learn more about what the Flathead offers, visit [fcvb.org](http://fcvb.org).

### Flathead County by the Numbers:

Population (2019): 103,806  
Median Household Income: \$56,182  
Median Home Price (2019): \$273,600  
Average Sales Price (2020): \$638,992  
Population per square mile: 17.9

## The Organization

The County Commission is the Executive as well as the Legislative branch for Flathead County. The Commission consists of three elected Commissioners. The County Commission is responsible for County policies, subdivision review, passing resolutions and ordinances, zoning, setting appropriations, setting levies for County funds, setting of fees, rural improvement districts, special districts, and appointing residents to boards and commissions.

The County is in excellent financial condition with healthy reserves and funded capital plans.

## The Position

Flathead County encompasses 5,098 square miles in northwest Montana. Approximately 94% of the land is National or State Forest, wilderness, agricultural, and corporate timber land, thus confining development to the remaining 6% of the area.

The Flathead County Planning & Zoning Office provides technical planning assistance to Flathead County. Led by the Planning Director and administered by the Board of County Commissioners, the Department’s primary responsibilities





include assisting in all facets of long-range Community and Neighborhood planning, Zoning Administration and Subdivision Review. They also administer the Flathead County Lakeshore Protection Program and Flathead County Floodplain Program.

The Department's first level of public approval comes through the Planning Board. The Board consists of nine board members who are appointed by the County Commission. The Planning Director is the principal liaison on all development activities with both the Planning Board and the County Commission. Additionally, the Director leads the team of approximately 10 individuals, provides guidance on planning issues, and mentors junior staff to provide excellent service to the community.

There is very little land that is zoned with the County's jurisdiction. This reflects the community's strong preference for personal property rights. Much of the inspection work in the County is driven through state regulation (such as water wells and septic systems) while code enforcement work is almost entirely complaint-driven. This means the work of the Planning and Zoning Office is substantially different from neighboring cities or even other counties in Montana.

**In this role, you will:**

- » Administer County policies, review and evaluate staff performance, and mentor or discipline staff as necessary
- » Serve as the primary staff liaison between the County and a variety of local land use advisory committees and community councils
- » Work regularly with private citizens and a variety of government agencies and developers on planning projects
- » Perform other duties as assigned by the Commissioners

To learn more, go to: [flathead.mt.gov](http://flathead.mt.gov)

## Ideal Candidate

The Flathead County Commission desires a planning professional who will embrace the local land use and legal framework, and work to ensure the County's planning efforts reflect and are continually responsive to the community's needs. Someone used to working in an environment with little to no zoning will feel quite comfortable in this role and those coming from more traditional planning backgrounds should be prepared to adapt to the local planning philosophy. The successful candidate will have a track record of providing sound counsel to elected officials and advisory committees, and extensive work with private citizens in a collaborative manner. Familiarity with environmental issues facing the West, like water quality, and working with state and federal regulatory agencies to ensure County compliance with established rules, is essential.

A strong leadership background and past experience managing in a planning environment is extremely desirable.

Lastly, the ideal candidate will appreciate and desire to embrace the distinctive northwest Montana lifestyle: a cordial, family-friendly, and independent community; all-season outdoor recreation; and magnificent scenery.

## EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

A Bachelor's degree in planning, public administration, or a related field is preferred. At least five years of progressively responsible experience in public/business administration or city/county planning, with a minimum of three years of supervisory experience. An AICP credential is desirable.

The County will consider an equivalent combination of education and experience.





## Compensation And Benefits

**Starting salary is \$82,089.**

The County offers a generous benefits package, including:

- » Medical, Dental, and Vision (traditional or HDHP + HSA)
- » 7.9% required pre-tax contribution of gross wages towards a defined benefit or defined contribution plan in the Montana Public Employee Retirement Systems (8.87% match from the County/State)
- » 15 vacation days per year (previous Montana government employees eligible for higher accruals)
- » 12 sick days per year
- » 10 holidays per year + 1 day for State General Elections
- » Compensatory time off: exempt employees receive compensatory time off for hours worked in excess of 40 hours/week at a 1:1 ratio subject to certain conditions
- » Longevity pay starting on the 5th year anniversary date at a rate of 0.5% of base salary, increasing 0.5% annually up to a max of 10%
- » Reimbursable relocation expenses up to \$7,000

## Application And Selection Procedure

To be considered for this exceptional career opportunity, submit your resume, cover letter, and a list of six work-related references (two supervisors, two direct reports and two colleagues) by **Friday, October 1, 2021**. Resume should reflect years and months of employment, beginning/ending dates as well as size of staff.

Please go to our website to submit your application:  
<https://www.cpsr.us/recruitment/1837>

For further information contact:

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Resumes will be screened in relation to the criteria outlined in this brochure. Candidates with the most relevant qualifications will be given preliminary interviews by the consultants. Candidates deemed most qualified will be referred to the County Commission. Selected candidates will be invited to participate in further interview and selection activities. An appointment will be made following comprehensive reference and background checks.

