

# DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & BUILDING

TOWN OF BLACKSBURG, VA





# Blacksburg

TOWN OF  
VIRGINIA

The **TOWN OF BLACKSBURG, VIRGINIA** is seeking an experienced planning professional to serve as Director of Planning and Building. The successful candidate will report to the Deputy Town Manager, Community Development and will serve as a member of the Town's Leadership Team responsible for directing operations and services within the Planning and Building Department. The Director will provide guidance and supervision of employees, prepare the departmental budget, and provide leadership for a highly visible function within the Town's government.

Qualified candidates are encouraged to submit a cover letter, resume, salary expectations, professional references and two or more representative project examples, to The Berkley Group via email to [jennifer.whistleman@bgllc.net](mailto:jennifer.whistleman@bgllc.net). While the position is open until filled, review of candidates will begin on or around January 22, 2024; however, highly qualified candidates may be invited for interview at any time. Inquiries relating to the Director of Planning and Building position may be directed to:

**Jennifer Whistleman**

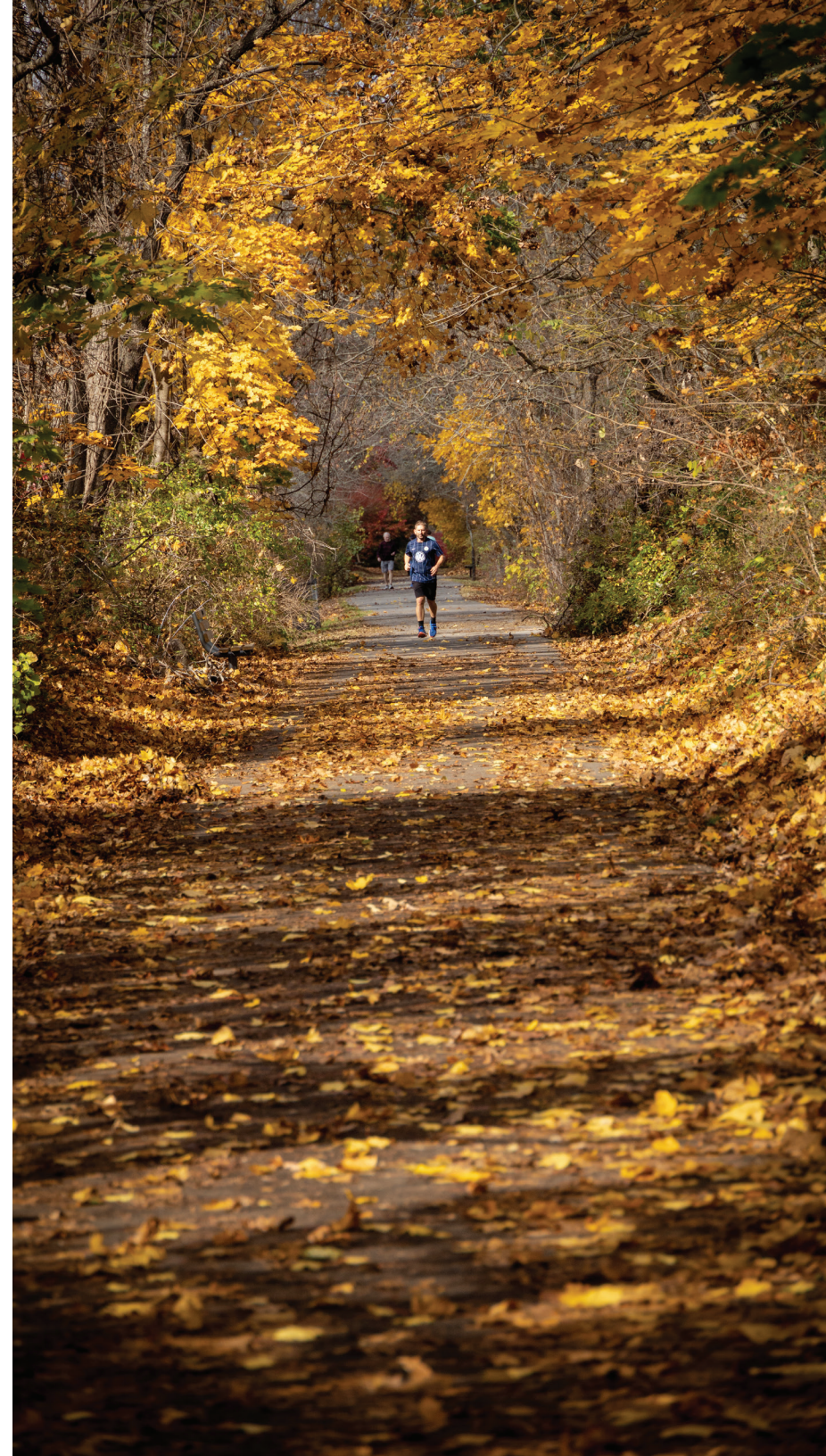
The Berkley Group

P.O. Box 181

Bridgewater, Virginia 22812

Email: [jennifer.whistleman@bgllc.net](mailto:jennifer.whistleman@bgllc.net)

Mobile: (540) 435-2505







## Our Town

Blacksburg is a beautiful town located in the New River Valley of Virginia, nestled on a plateau between the Blue Ridge and Allegheny mountains. Blacksburg serves as the hub of the Roanoke/New River Valley region. Established in 1798, Blacksburg has grown from a town of a few dozen families to a population of over 45,000 people, making it one of the largest towns in Virginia. The town is comprised of a healthy, highly educated, and diverse population, making it a very progressive community with a high quality of life. Blacksburg has activities that appeal to young professionals, families and seniors. There are numerous parks to choose from, making the town an excellent venue for the outdoors lover.

Downtown Blacksburg contains a unique collection of specialty retail and dining establishments, art galleries, and performance halls. Wide brick sidewalks line streets flanked on each side by decorative street lamps, hanging flower baskets and park benches.

At the core of Blacksburg's vibrant and engaging downtown is Virginia's largest land-grant university, Virginia Tech. The university continues to position itself as a major research institution. The presence of Virginia Tech as a corporate citizen brings significant advantages to the economy of the town. The combination of approximately 35,700 students and 13,000 faculty, administrative staff and support positions brings significant buying power to the merchants and tax base of the town. Growth in technology-based research and the spawning of businesses from the university's research park, the Corporate Research Center, reflect well on the area. The wealth of resources offered by a major academic institution makes the town an attractive venue for businesses.

The Town of Blacksburg is part of the Montgomery County School System. The public school system in Blacksburg includes four elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. The public school system enjoys a reputation of graduating well-prepared students, and has a low teacher to student ratio offering each child an opportunity to obtain the best education possible. Several private schools also operate facilities within the region.



# TOWN OF BLACKSBURG, VA

Recipient of Virginia Municipal League **Innovation Award for Community Health** for 2022 and 2023.

Named one the **"Best Place in the U.S. to Raise Kids"**  
(Bloomberg Businessweek 2016, 2012, 2011)

Voted **"Safest City in Virginia"** (Alarms.org 2018)

Named the No. 4 **"Best Affordable College Towns for Recent Grads – And Everyone Else"** (Realtor.com 2018)

Named one of the Top 100 **"Best Places to Live"** (Livability 2018)

Ranked No. 15 **"Best Places to Raise a Family"** (Wallet Hub 2019)

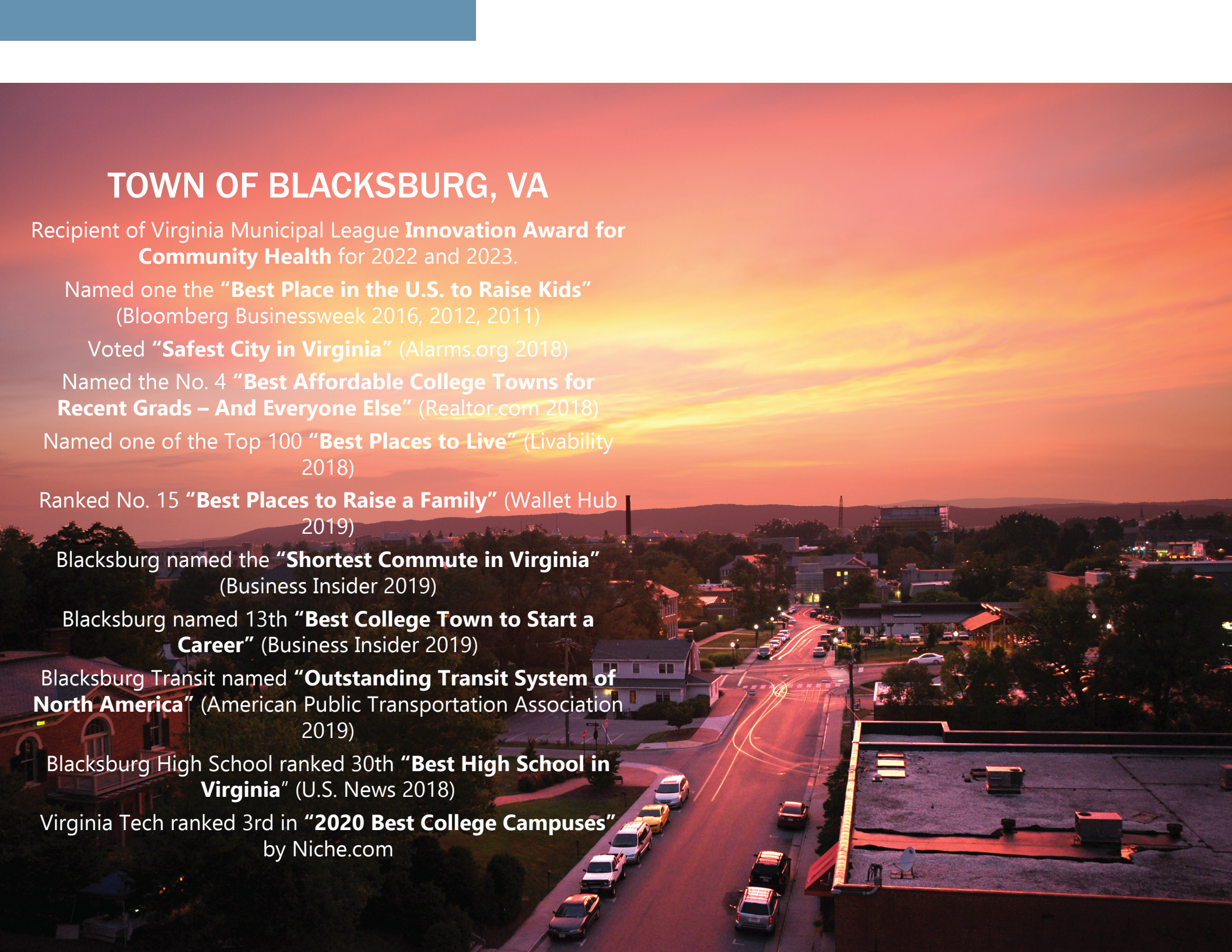
Blacksburg named the **"Shortest Commute in Virginia"**  
(Business Insider 2019)

Blacksburg named 13th **"Best College Town to Start a Career"** (Business Insider 2019)

Blacksburg Transit named **"Outstanding Transit System of North America"** (American Public Transportation Association 2019)

Blacksburg High School ranked 30th **"Best High School in Virginia"** (U.S. News 2018)

Virginia Tech ranked 3rd in **"2020 Best College Campuses"**  
by Niche.com





# Town Government

Since 1952, the Town of Blacksburg has been organized under the Council-Manager form of government. Council members are elected for four-year terms and are elected on a staggered basis, with elections held every two years. The Blacksburg Town Council, comprised of seven members, serves as the legislative body of the local government and is responsible for adopting all ordinances and resolutions, approving the annual operating and capital budgets, setting all tax rates, approving the five year Capital Improvement Program, setting all user fees, making land use and zoning decisions, and establishing long-range plans and policies. The mayor is elected and has the right to vote on matters brought before the governing body. The council appoints the Town Manager to act as the administrative head of the town. The council also appoints the Town Clerk to perform a wide variety of clerical and administrative work. The 2023-24 Operating Budget totals \$97 million for all funds.







## Planning & Building Department

The Planning and Building Department develops Blacksburg's long-range comprehensive plan, reviews site development plans, issues building construction permits and conducts inspections. The Department also enforces the Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance, and the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code. The Department partners with the community to manage growth and promote high quality development by implementing the community's vision for the future, providing information and creative recommendations based on comprehensive planning, building, and engineering best practices, and effectively explaining and enforcing regulations.

The Director of the Planning and Building Department leads a team of experienced professionals to deliver professional planning, development/redevelopment, code compliance, and zoning services consistent with the Town Code and Comprehensive Plan. The Director will provide technical assistance to the Town Manager, Town Council, Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, and Historic Design Review Board to guide land use policy development and decision-making. The Planning and Building Department has 16 employees, with an annual budget of approximately \$1.8 million.

The Director reports to the Deputy Town Manager-Community Development and ultimately to the Town Manager and is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the department, supervising employees, developing work schedules/programs, ensuring compliance with safety regulations, and developing and administering the annual department budget. The Director is responsible for managing personnel issues in the department, along with filling staff vacancies. The Director is a member of the Town's leadership team of department heads who are responsible for the delivery of a wide array of services to the citizens of Blacksburg.





# Current Focus & Opportunities

The Town Manager has identified several current areas of focus and opportunities for the new Director to work on, including the following:

- Collaborate with and understand the various perspectives of community stakeholders and interest groups to balance their aspirations with overall Town needs and resources.
- Actively work to continuously improve the functionality of the department.
- Continue the process of updating planning and zoning standards to meet current development trends.
- Review and improve code enforcement practices to support neighborhoods.
- Support recent technology upgrades in the department (Open Gov platform and electronic plan review) to create operational efficiencies and enhanced customer service.
- Provide pro-active leadership for timely and accurate development plan reviews.
- Support the Town's affordable housing initiatives and manage demand for student housing growth created by a growing university.







## Qualifications, Education & Experience

The following education and experience factors are the expected qualifications for successful performance:

- Bachelor's degree with coursework in urban planning, urban design, public administration, or a related field. Master's degree in a similar discipline is preferred.
- Ten years of progressively responsible professional planning experience with a minimum of five years of supervisory and project management experience.
- American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) certification is preferred.
- Demonstrated ability to actively participate in and lead a dynamic team of professionals.
- Ability to successfully navigate an environment where public stakeholders, developers, elected and appointed officials have differing views on planning policy issues and projects.
- Demonstrated ability to work successfully in a team environment, functioning for the good of the organization and the community over the individual.
- Ability to assess social cues and maintain situational awareness.
- Demonstrated ability to effectively manage people and programs and to provide clear direction and establish accountability.
- Ability to prioritize, organize, and manage multiple projects.

## Personal Traits & Desired Characteristics

- Professionally competent and strategic thinker who is confident in their job knowledge and able to adapt to changing priorities and navigate a sophisticated environment.
- Practical problem solver and decision maker who is customer focused.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills, including the ability to listen effectively and understand differing views.
- Engaging and collaborative style, setting a departmental vision to implement effective processes and schedules.
- Effective and efficient manager, sharing the workload while maintaining departmental leadership, motivating employees, and supporting teamwork across other departments.
- Comfortable operating in a constantly changing environment and demonstrated ability to lead change where needed.





## Compensation & Benefits

Compensation for the Director of Planning and Building is dependent upon qualifications and experience within a starting range of \$116,00 – \$135,000 annually. The successful candidate will be provided the Town's benefits package including participation in the Virginia Retirement System (VRS), health/dental/vision insurance, vacation and sick leave, professional development support, and other benefits provided for all Town employees.

Visit: <https://www.blacksburg.gov/departments/departments-a-k/human-resources/benefits> to learn more.

## Application Process

Initial review of candidates will begin on or around January 22, 2024. Applications received after that date may be considered until the position is filled. Timely submittal will ensure the most advantageous review. Highly qualified candidates may be invited to interview at any time. To be considered, please submit a cover letter, resume, salary expectations, professional references and two or more representative project examples to The Berkley Group, via e-mail to [jennifer.whistleman@bgllc.net](mailto:jennifer.whistleman@bgllc.net). Questions may be directed to:

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Mobile: 540.435.2505

For additional information visit <https://blacksburg.gov/community/town-government/welcome>