



PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

City of **South Pasadena, CA**

Recruitment Services Provided By





The Opportunity

This is a rare opportunity to lead a high-performing, full-service Public Works Department in one of Southern California's most unique and civically engaged communities. South Pasadena is seeking a strategic and hands-on leader to guide critical infrastructure investments, steward environmental and sustainability initiatives, and modernize systems that support long-term service delivery. With strong backing from the City Council and City Manager, the next Public Works Director will join a collaborative executive team at a pivotal moment—shaping the future of a city that blends small-town character with metropolitan ambition.

About South Pasadena

The City of South Pasadena, incorporated in 1888, is a charming and historic community nestled in the West San Gabriel Valley region of Los Angeles County. Encompassing just 3.4 square miles and home to approximately 26,000 residents, South Pasadena is widely recognized for its strong sense of community, tree-lined streets, and distinctive small-town character while in the heart of a major metropolitan area.

Ideally situated along the 110 Freeway and served by the Metro L (Gold) Line, the City offers convenient access to downtown Los Angeles, Pasadena, and a host of cultural, recreational, and employment destinations throughout Southern California. The South Pasadena Station connects residents and visitors alike to a growing regional transit network, making car-free commutes increasingly viable.

South Pasadena's commercial corridors feature a vibrant mix of locally owned businesses, boutiques, and restaurants, contributing to the city's unique charm and economic vitality. Mission Street, the city's historic downtown, is a designated cultural district and a hub for community events, weekend farmers markets, and outdoor dining experiences. The city actively supports historic preservation efforts and maintains a balance between thoughtful development and the protection of its architectural heritage.

The community is also known for its top-ranked public schools operated by the South Pasadena Unified School District. The district's academic reputation attracts families from across the region, with students routinely performing among the highest in the state. In addition, South Pasadena's neighborhoods feature an array of well-maintained parks, including the Arroyo Seco natural area, and offer year-round outdoor recreation opportunities.

With a strong civic identity, active community engagement, and proximity to major economic and cultural centers, South Pasadena offers an exceptional quality of life for those seeking a welcoming, inclusive, and connected place to call home.





The City Government

South Pasadena is a General Law city operating under the Council-Manager form of government. The City Council consists of five members elected by district to serve overlapping four-year terms. Each year, the Council selects one of its members to serve as Mayor on a rotating basis. The City Council also appoints the City Manager and City Attorney. Other elected officials include the City Clerk and City Treasurer.

Despite its modest size, South Pasadena is a full-service city that provides Police, Fire, Library, Public Works, and Community Services directly to the community. The City prides itself on responsive governance, community engagement, and preserving its distinctive character while addressing modern municipal challenges. For FY 2024-2025, the City's total adopted budget across all funds is approximately \$58 million, with a General Fund budget of approximately \$34 million.

Learn more about the City of South Pasadena [here](#).

The Public Works Department

The City of South Pasadena's Public Works Department is responsible for maintaining and enhancing the City's infrastructure and essential services. The department oversees a wide range of functions including water production and distribution, street and sewer maintenance, capital improvement planning, engineering, parks and facility maintenance, environmental services, sustainability initiatives, and transportation planning.

The department is led by the Public Works Director and organized into six functional divisions: Operations & Maintenance, Engineering, Capital Improvement Program, Water, Environmental Services & Sustainability, and Transportation. Each division is managed by a supervisor, manager, or program lead, with additional support provided by administrative staff and two part-time management interns. A Deputy Public Works Director and a City Engineer assist the Director in day-to-day oversight.

With a staff of 43 full-time and 2 part-time employees and a FY 24/25 operating budget of \$18 million, the Public Works Department plays a vital role in ensuring the reliability, safety, and sustainability of the City's physical assets and infrastructure systems.

\$18M
Operating Budget

43 FTE
Employees



The Position

The Public Works Director will serve as a trusted advisor to the City Manager and a vital leader within the City's executive team. This position offers the opportunity to shape South Pasadena's infrastructure systems, sustainability efforts, and capital investment priorities, while strengthening operational effectiveness across a wide range of essential public services. The Director leads a full-service Public Works Department and plays a key role in advancing citywide goals for livability, resilience, and community trust. Key areas of responsibility include:

- **Department Leadership & Oversight:** Direct all operations of the Public Works Department, including water, streets, sewers, storm drains, engineering, capital improvement, parks and facilities maintenance, environmental services, and sustainability initiatives.
- **Strategic Planning & Project Delivery:** Oversee the City's Capital Improvement Program, from long-term planning and prioritization to design, construction, and contract administration.
- **Sustainability & Environmental Stewardship:** Advance the City's environmental goals by implementing programs that promote water conservation, pollution prevention, waste reduction, and community sustainability.

- **Infrastructure & Asset Management:** Monitor the condition of the City's infrastructure and guide decisions related to maintenance, repair, and replacement of core systems and public facilities.
- **Organizational Effectiveness:** Manage department personnel and resources to ensure high-quality service delivery. Oversee the development and implementation of policies, performance standards, and operating procedures.
- **Budgeting & Fiscal Responsibility:** Prepare and manage departmental budgets, forecasts, and expenditures to align with Council priorities and long-term financial sustainability.
- **Cross-Agency & Community Engagement:** Serve as a primary liaison to residents, outside agencies, utilities, contractors, and City leadership. Represent the department in community meetings and public forums.





Challenges & Opportunities

The next Public Works Director will join South Pasadena as part of a renewed leadership team, with strong support from the City Council, executive staff, and an engaged community. With visible challenges and committed leadership, this is an opportunity to shape meaningful, lasting improvements in a city that values innovation, integrity, and transparency. Key priorities include:

- **Developing an Asset Management Strategy:** Establish a comprehensive, data-informed asset management program to guide preventative maintenance, prioritize capital investment, and support long-term infrastructure planning.
- **Capital Project Delivery & Process Improvement:** Strengthen systems and processes across all phases of capital project delivery, from planning and design through construction and closeout. The next Public Works Director will also lead efforts to improve maintenance operations and implement tools to ensure responsive service request tracking, timely follow-up, and consistent performance monitoring.
- **Stewarding the Urban Forest:** Maintain and enhance South Pasadena's iconic tree canopy, a vital part of the city's environmental health and community character. The City's Tree Ordinance—first adopted in 1991—continues to evolve, and the next Director will play a key role in its implementation and refinement.
- **Addressing Transportation and Traffic Concerns:** Respond to community concerns around traffic safety and congestion. Advance solutions through thoughtful planning, engineering, and coordination with regional partners.
- **Delivering a Robust Capital Program:** Lead the planning and execution of a Capital Improvement Program that is notably ambitious for a city of South Pasadena's size, with projects that directly impact quality of life, resilience, and sustainability.

The Ideal Candidate

The ideal candidate for the position of Public Works Director for the City of South Pasadena will possess certain traits and experiences that will lead to success:

- An orientation toward building strong and effective teams who are invested in working together to continually seek improvement.
- A strong leader, committed to leading by example and delivering excellent customer service.
- An appreciation and acceptance for continually improving operations through developing people, improving processes, and investing in technology.
- Willingness to invest in the mentorship and professional development of employees.
- An understanding of change management and building employee buy-in.
- Flexibility, adaptability, and a willingness to implement new ideas – even at a calculated risk.

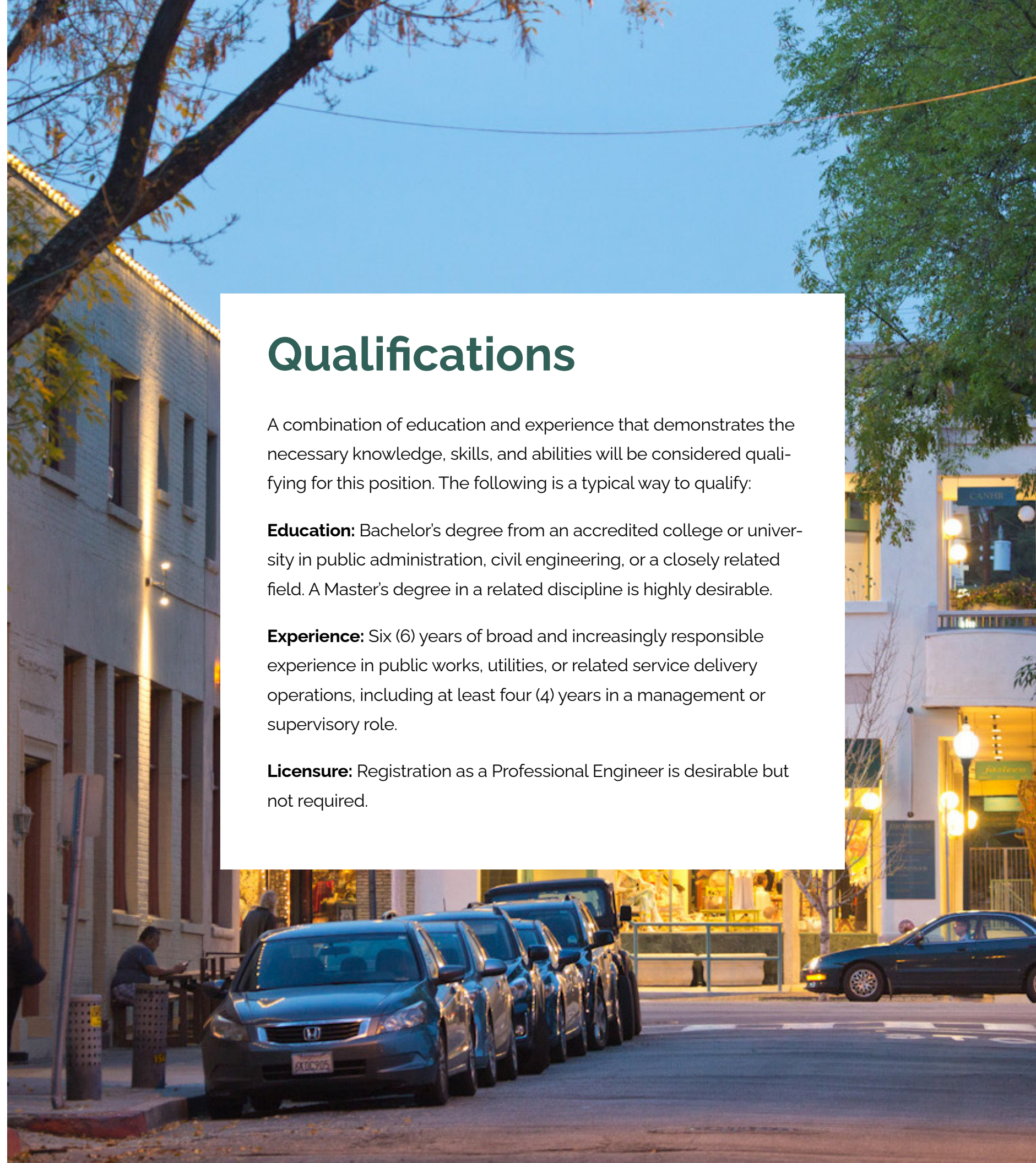
Qualifications

A combination of education and experience that demonstrates the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities will be considered qualifying for this position. The following is a typical way to qualify:

Education: Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in public administration, civil engineering, or a closely related field. A Master's degree in a related discipline is highly desirable.

Experience: Six (6) years of broad and increasingly responsible experience in public works, utilities, or related service delivery operations, including at least four (4) years in a management or supervisory role.

Licensure: Registration as a Professional Engineer is desirable but not required.





Salary & Benefits

The City of South Pasadena provides a competitive compensation and benefits package. The salary for this role is **up to \$223,128**, with specific placement within the range dependent on qualifications and experience. Key elements of the City's benefits program include:

Merit Pay: Up to 2% above the salary step in the pay schedule.

CalPERS Retirement: 2.0% @ 55 for Classic PERS member employees and 2.0% @ 62 for new PERS members.

Deferred Compensation: The City contributes 1% of base salary to a deferred compensation plan.

Insurance:

- **Medical, Dental, and Vision:** The City offers comprehensive medical, dental, and vision plans through CalPERS for the employee and their family. The City pays a significant portion of the premiums.
- **Accidental Death & Dismemberment**
- **Long-Term Disability:** After six months of service, the City provides Long-Term Disability Insurance.
- **Term Life:** City provided term life insurance of \$50,000.

Leave:

- **Vacation:** Accrual rate based on years of service. Credit for previous years of service may be considered.
- **Holidays:** 11 recognized holidays per year, plus two floating holidays
- **Management Leave:** 90 hours per year, with ability to cash out up to 60 hours annually
- **Sick Leave:** 96 hours per year

Application & Selection Process

Apply Immediately - Will close once a strong pool of candidates is established. Interested candidates are encouraged to submit a cover letter and résumé online at:

www.mosaicpublic.com/careers

This recruitment will be handled with strict confidentiality. References will not be contacted until mutual interest has been established.

CONFIDENTIAL INQUIRIES ARE WELCOMED TO:

Greg Nelson | greg@mosaicpublic.com | (916) 550-4100

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The City of South Pasadena is an equal opportunity employer.

