



THE TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND, SC
invites qualified candidates to apply for the position of

PLANNING DIRECTOR

Anticipated salary range: \$160,000 - \$175,000 +/- DOQ



Shape the Future of One of America's Premier Coastal Communities

Lead the vision. Protect the character. Guide what comes next.

The Town of Hilton Head Island is seeking an experienced and forward-thinking planning professional to serve as its next Planning Director – a rare opportunity to help shape the future of one of the Southeast's most recognized and beloved coastal communities.

From workforce housing and redevelopment to environmental stewardship and resilience planning, this role sits at the center of the Island's future. You will lead complex initiatives that balance economic vitality, natural resource protection, and quality of life in a community known worldwide for doing growth differently.

Why Hilton Head Island?

Hilton Head Island is more than a destination – it is a nationally recognized model for thoughtful planning, environmental preservation, and community design. The Town’s commitment to smart growth, natural beauty, and long-term stewardship has created a community unlike any other on the East Coast.

Here, planning matters.

You will join an organization that values innovation, collaboration, and strategic leadership while giving professionals the opportunity to make a visible, lasting impact on the community they serve.

Quick facts:



~40,000 residents
Year-round population



2.5M+ annual visitors
One of the Southeast’s premier coastal destinations



12-mile barrier island
Located along the South Carolina coast near Savannah, GA



~\$95,000 median household income
Strong and growing regional economy



70+ miles of pathways & trails
Nationally recognized for environmental stewardship and quality of life





The Opportunity

As Planning Director, you will lead the Town's Planning Department with oversight of:

- Community planning
- Development services
- Workforce housing initiatives
- Building permitting and inspection
- Long-range planning
- Zoning and land use policy
- Redevelopment strategy
- Environmental and natural resource protection

Reporting directly to the Deputy Town Manager, you will help guide policy decisions that shape the Island's future while leading a high-performing department committed to service, innovation, and community engagement.

This is a role for a strategic leader who can navigate complexity, build consensus, and inspire confidence among elected officials, residents, developers, and stakeholders alike.



What You'll Lead

You will play a central role in advancing many of the Town's most important priorities, including:

Strategic Planning & Vision

- Lead updates to the Comprehensive Plan, Strategic Plan, and Workforce Housing Framework
- Guide policy decisions related to growth, redevelopment, and resilience
- Shape zoning and Land Management Ordinance (LMO) initiatives

Leadership & Team Development

- Supervise and mentor senior departmental leaders
- Foster a culture of accountability, innovation, and collaboration
- Build organizational capacity and long-term talent development

Community Impact

- Balance development pressures with environmental stewardship
- Support housing and redevelopment strategies that strengthen community sustainability
- Represent the Town before Council, boards, agencies, and community groups

Regional Collaboration

- Serve as a liaison with state, regional, and federal partners
- Advance resilience and disaster recovery planning
- Build partnerships across sectors and jurisdictions



The Leader We're Seeking

The ideal candidate is both visionary and pragmatic – someone who understands how to translate long-range goals into actionable policy while navigating the realities of a high-profile coastal community.

You bring:

- Deep expertise in planning, zoning, and development services
- Strong political acumen and communication skills
- Experience leading complex initiatives and multidisciplinary teams
- A collaborative, solutions-oriented leadership style
- The ability to build trust with diverse stakeholders

Experience in coastal, tourism-driven, or high-growth communities is especially valuable.

Minimum Qualifications

Candidates should possess:

- A bachelor's degree in Urban Planning, Public Administration, Architecture, Landscape Architecture, or a related field
- At least 10 years of progressively responsible planning experience
- At least 7 years in a senior leadership role
- Demonstrated experience managing complex planning and development projects

Preferred qualifications include:

- Master's degree
- AICP certification



Why This Role Matters

Few planning leadership opportunities offer this level of visibility, impact, and influence.

Hilton Head Island continues to face important questions around:

- Housing affordability
- Sustainable growth
- Environmental resilience
- Redevelopment
- Mobility and infrastructure
- Preservation of community character

As Planning Director, your work will directly influence how the Island evolves for generations to come.



Why You'll Want to Be Here

A Community Known for Excellence

Hilton Head Island is internationally recognized for its environmental stewardship, planning standards, and exceptional quality of life.

Meaningful Leadership

You will have a seat at the table on some of the Town's most significant strategic initiatives.

Collaborative Culture

Town leadership values professionalism, innovation, and cross-department collaboration.

Exceptional Lifestyle

From beaches and marshes to parks and trails, Hilton Head offers a coastal lifestyle few communities can match.




Compensation & Benefits

The anticipated salary range for this position is:

\$160,000 - \$175,000 +/- DOQ

The Town provides a strong benefits package designed to support your' health, financial security, and work-life balance, including:

- Health, dental, vision, and life insurance
- Employer-paid life and disability insurance
- Retirement benefits, including a 401(k) match and 457 Deferred Compensation Plan
- Paid vacation, sick leave, and floating holidays
- Health and wellness programs
- Professional development opportunities
- Employee credit union access
- Relocation assistance



Help shape the future of a community
defined by vision, stewardship, and place.

How to Apply

For additional information and to apply, visit the Pracademic Partners job portal at <https://www.pracademicpartners.com/current-recruitments>.

To express interest, please submit a cover letter, resume, and list of three (3) professional references through the portal.

Employment is contingent upon the completion of a successful background check. This position is considered open until a final selection is made.

Pracademic Partners is assisting the Town of Hilton Head Island with this executive search. For inquiries or nominations, please contact: Dr. Ian M. Coyle, ICMA-CM at 585.943.0589

*Town of Hilton Head Island is an Equal Opportunity Employer
and encourages candidates from diverse backgrounds to apply.*