



THE TOWN OF MILLS RIVER

Invites Your Interest in the Position of

TOWN MANAGER



Nestled in the valley of the western NC Mountains, the [Town of Mills River](#), NC seeks an experienced municipal professional to serve as its next **Town Manager**. This leader will join a close-knit community united around the values of responsible growth, community preservation, land stewardship, connectivity and access, inclusive decision-making, and health & wellness partnerships.

The next Mills River **Town Manager** will appreciate the rural farming culture of the community and uphold the Town's mission to *offer exceptional quality of life and opportunities for prosperity to its residents, property owners, and businesses*. Mills River desires a personable leader to lead its community – someone who:

- Values time with people, is compassionate about the needs of others, and exhibits empathy and patience in interactions with others;
- Believes in and supports open, transparent communication between a Manager and staff;
- Has impeccable time management skills, the ability to wear many hats and navigate many moving pieces while meeting various deadlines and managing daily municipal operations;
- Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of municipal HR practices, policies and procedures;
- Has a high standard of integrity and holds self and staff accountable to a high standard of excellence; and,
- Exhibits active listening skills and is articulate in communicating to various stakeholders, including Council members—someone who quickly builds others' confidence in their knowledge of municipal leadership and governance.

The next **Town Manager** will assist in preserving the rural culture of the community while uniting residents and leaders to embrace and manage growth while strategically critical needs such as farmland preservation.

Experience strategically balancing budgets and navigating various opinions and perspectives is essential for this position.



About the Organization and Position:

The Town of Mills River operates under a Council-Manager form of government. The Council consists of a Mayor, a Mayor Pro-Tem, and three council members. The Town's services are broadly categorized into four service areas: General Government and Administration, Public Safety, Planning and Zoning, and Parks and Recreation.

Mills River provides law enforcement, fire protection, and building code enforcement through contracts with the Henderson County Sheriff's Office, Mills River Fire & Rescue, and Henderson County Building Inspections. The Town's Planning & Zoning Department is busy managing the influx of development, including a recently approved new shopping center and grocery store. The Department is responsible for zoning, subdivision, and watershed administration. The Town's Parks and Recreation department, its largest department, provides quality recreational facilities, parks, and programs that are safe, diverse, and enriching to the Mills River community. Parks and Recreation services are provided by a Parks and Recreation Director, a Recreation Program Coordinator, three full-time Park Maintenance Technicians, and three part-time Park Rangers.

Town leaders envision a community with choices for housing, jobs, and recreation while being open to new ideas, supportive of community-building efforts, and focused on common goals. In recognition of the changing development patterns and pressure for additional growth, the Mills River Town Council initiated the development of a comprehensive plan in 2019. This Plan – [Making Mills River Comprehensive Plan](#) – was completed and adopted in May 2021. Population estimates predict a steady growth in population of approximately 2,500 residents and 1,250 new jobs by 2045. This growth prediction equals about 800 new housing units or .8 houses per week.

Making Mills River Comprehensive Plan goals include:

1. Protect and enhance the rural and small-town character of Mills River.
2. Promote the preservation of agricultural and natural lands while respecting property rights.
3. Manage growth and invest in Mills River to promote land stewardship, community development, and fiscal responsibility.
4. Provide and maintain exceptional public facilities and services.
5. Build infrastructure to support local needs and diverse economic development.
6. Encourage housing choices for people of all ages and income levels.

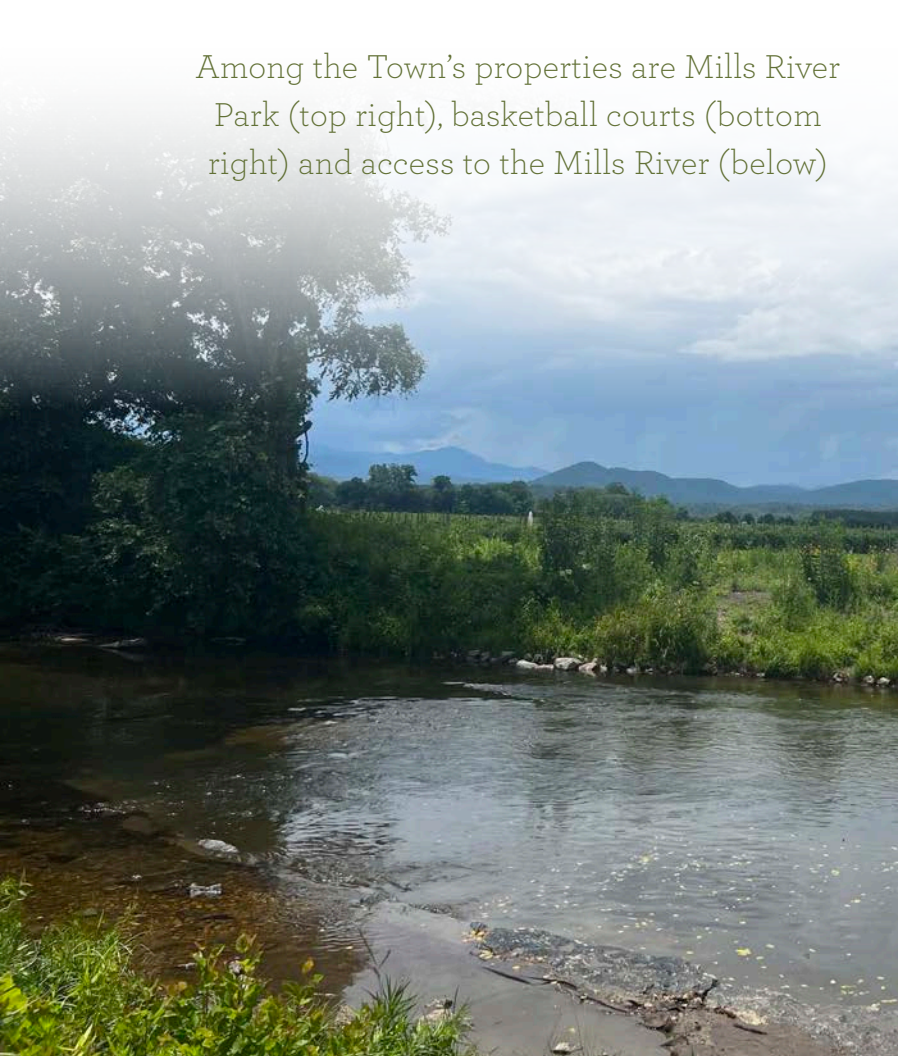
Also completed in 2021 was a system-wide [parks and recreation masterplan](#). Public input illustrated a desire for parks and recreation programming, special events, and additional facilities such as walking and hiking trails. Many of the capital improvements included in the five-year (CIP) plan represent priorities identified in the Parks and Recreation Masterplan.

The Town's property includes two dog parks, two picnic shelters, a baseball/softball field, basketball courts, tennis courts, a walking trail, multipurpose fields, walking trails, and river access. Expected new facilities for FY 24 include accessible playgrounds, wildflower meadows, and additional greenspace (like the existing soccer fields). The rendering of [Mills River Park](#) displays a family-centric park surrounded by the beauty of Mills River's rural mountain landscape.

The Mills River **Town Manager** manages a staff team of 11 full-time and 4 part-time employees with 4 direct reports: Finance Director/Town Clerk, Planning Director, Parks and Recreation Director, and Tax Collector. The **Town Manager** will oversee Mills River's [FY 2023 – 2024 budget](#) of \$9.1M (\$6M Operating, \$3.1M Capital Projects), supported by a tax rate of \$.17 per \$100 of assessed tax value.

Upon their appointment, the **Town Manager** will dive into projects or processes already in motion, such as updating the Town's codes into a UDO. The **Town Manager** will work cohesively with the Planning Director, the contracted consultant, and necessary stakeholders to facilitate a smooth process of updating the Town's codes. As a small municipal organization, the **Town Manager** has historically performed all HR functions and duties. In evaluating growth and expansion, the next **Town Manager** will strategically assess the structure and function of the organization and advocate for changes to best position the organization for growth and sustainability.

Among the Town's properties are Mills River Park (top right), basketball courts (bottom right) and access to the Mills River (below)



Key priorities for the Mills River Town Manager include:

- In close collaboration with the Town Council and key stakeholders, develop and implement a Capital Improvement Plan for the Town's newly acquired 70-acre property while facilitating the implementation of other capital projects and constructing a financing plan for all capital projects over the next five years.
- Strategically develop a successful model for recruitment and retention of personnel, succession planning for retirements, and cross-training and professional development to build skills, achieve performance excellence, and develop staff for promotional opportunities and varied job assignments.
- Evaluate the Town's services, programs, and community needs and identify priorities for expansion that align with the Town's needs and equally preserve its culture.

One of the key priorities for the next Mills River **Town Manager** will be to maintain a positive, autonomous working environment where staff are valued, work-life balance is prioritized, and casual workspaces are embraced.



About the Community:

The Town of Mills River is in Henderson County, North Carolina, near the convergence of the Mills and French Broad Rivers, about 20 miles south of Asheville and 50 miles north of Greenville, South Carolina. Portions of the Town's western boundary follow the boundary of Pisgah National Forest. Mills River covers much of northwest Henderson County, stretching from the Transylvania County border to the south and the Buncombe County border to the north. The Town covers 22 square miles of mountains, valleys, floodplains, and various land uses, from traditional row crops to greenhouses, single-family homes, and industrial users.

Established in 2003, Mills River is home to 7,400 people. It was founded with the vision of a safe, wholesome town with orderly growth and strong community identity, free from undue government intrusion. This family-centric community has gradually attracted entrepreneurs and major employers seeking an ideal location for their businesses. The beauty of the NC mountains and rural landscape that surrounds Mills River lured Sierra Nevada Brewing Company to choose Mills River as its second location in 2014. The exquisite facility, which draws an abundance of people annually, is located near the banks of the French Broad River.

In Fall 2020, Amazon built a \$28 million, 112,000 square foot distribution facility in Mills River, which brought 200+ jobs to the region. Though business opportunities abound, and housing developments continue to arise, much of the area's farmland remains preserved, which is a main priority for residents and town leaders. Tucked in a valley, Mills River provides a retreat from the busy city life yet is just 10 minutes from the Asheville Regional Airport and major interstates. Camping, fishing, tubing, and horseback riding are just a few activities that make life in Mills River unique.

(Photo: Sierra Nevada)



The Town of Mills River is a family-centric town, actively promoting and enhancing its rural and small-town character *(Mark Leet Photography)*.



The Town offers many outdoor activities, such as fishing and tubing on the Mills River (above). Located near the banks of the French Broad River, the beautiful Sierra Nevada Brewing Company (below) is a popular hangout for residents and visitors alike.



Qualifications:

The successful candidate **must** have a minimum of a bachelor's degree and five years of progressively responsible management experience. **Preferred qualifications** include familiarity with NC municipal management, a master's degree, ICMA credentialing, and progressively responsible experience as a department head, Assistant City Manager, or City Manager within small to midsized municipal government organizations. Experience with finance, budgeting and planning are important.

Salary and Benefits:

The hiring range for this position is \$105,000 —\$125,000. The starting salary is based on experience and qualifications. Mills River provides comprehensive benefits comparable to towns of similar size. Residency is desirable and will be negotiated with the final candidate.

To apply, please visit

<https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/developmentalassociates/jobs/4455137/town-manager-town-of-mills-river-nc?pagetype=jobOpportunitiesJobs>

Please note the following:

- All applications must be submitted online via the Developmental Associates application portal (link above) – NOT the Town's employment application portal or any other external website.
- Resumes and cover letters must be uploaded with the application.
- Applicants should apply by **May 1, 2024**.
- The hiring team will invite successful semi-finalists to participate in virtual interviews and skill evaluations on **May 30 - 31, 2024**. Candidates are encouraged to reserve these dates for virtual meetings should they be invited to participate.
- Direct *inquiries* to hireing@developmentalassociates.com.

The Town of Mills River is an Equal Opportunity Employer.



Developmental Associates, LLC manages the recruitment and selection process for this position. To learn more about our selection process, visit <https://developmentalassociates.com/client-openings/>, select "Client Openings," and scroll down to "Important Information for Applicants."