



CITY OF BAINBRIDGE ISLAND, WASHINGTON

City Manager



The Position

The City of Bainbridge Island, Washington is seeking a dynamic, community-oriented leader to serve as its next City Manager. This is a rare opportunity to lead a high-performing organization in one of the Seattle metropolitan area's most distinctive and civically engaged communities. Bainbridge Islanders care deeply about environmental stewardship, thoughtful land use, and the long-term health of their community. The City Manager will join the organization at a pivotal moment, guiding the City through the implementation of critical planning updates, navigating complex affordable housing initiatives, and strengthening public trust during a period of spirited community discourse.

The City Manager serves as the Chief Executive Officer, appointed by and serving at the pleasure of the seven-member City Council. The City Manager directs the operations and activities of the City, translating Council policy into action while ensuring the efficient and effective delivery of municipal services. Furthermore, they provide comprehensive management and leadership to ensure services and infrastructure are delivered in an equitable, sustainable, and effective manner. The City Manager leads and supports a diverse staff of 141 full-time equivalent employees in further developing an outstanding organizational culture that supports excellence, continuous improvement, and a high degree of customer service. Direct reports include the Deputy City Manager, City Attorney, and most Department Directors.

The City Manager develops short and long-term goals, plans, and measurements to implement the priorities and directives of the City Council. They actively engage with the Council, senior leadership, and staff to review and evaluate organizational initiatives, and to facilitate strategies that proactively address issues, resolve problems, and promote organizational effectiveness. The City Manager attends all Council meetings, provides reports and recommendations, and keeps the Council well-informed on matters affecting the City. They routinely advise the Council on the City's financial condition and needs, prepare and submit the biennial budget, and administer the adopted budget with prudent fiscal stewardship.

The City Manager maintains positive public relations, engages with the community, and effectively represents Bainbridge Island to outside agencies and intergovernmental partners. The City Manager builds and nurtures strong collaborative relationships with the Bainbridge Island Metropolitan Park & Recreation District, the Bainbridge Island Fire District, Citizen Advisory Groups, and other community partners. They maintain an active and visible presence in the community, attend events, meet with local businesses and community organizations, and serve as a public face of City government. In addition to managing external relationships, the City Manager leads the executive team in fostering a welcoming, inclusive, and high-performing organizational culture where staff feel valued, supported, and empowered.





Priorities

- Establish and nurture strong, positive relationships with the City Council, Executive Leadership Team, and broader City staff. Collectively work to understand the City's organization, operations, and culture to effectively prioritize and cooperatively develop achievable goals.
- Intentionally become a part of the Bainbridge Island community. Cultivate strong community connections, maintain a visible and accessible presence, actively listen to residents, strengthen community trust, and support authentic engagement through open, transparent communication.
- Develop an integrated strategy that fosters organizational alignment and consistency. Ensure finances and resources are aligned to prioritize time, energy, and investments that lead to sustainable and equitable outcomes and support the greatest impact on the community.
- Ensure long-term fiscal sustainability, uphold fiscal accountability, and clearly communicate budgetary impacts and trade-offs to support core services while advancing equitable, high-impact community outcomes.
- Drive the implementation of the state-mandated Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update and related development regulations. Successfully guide the organization through a series of deferred but important planning efforts, including the Winslow Subarea Plan, Shoreline Management Program, the Critical Areas Ordinance, the Groundwater Management Plan, and the Island-wide Mobility Plan.
- Advance housing affordability and availability by championing innovative and sustainable solutions, guiding key projects, and collaborating with the City Council, staff, and community to identify equitable opportunities, secure funding, and expand diverse housing options in a community where growth, density, and environmental preservation are deeply held and often competing values.
- Ensure sustainable water resource management by protecting the Island's sensitive sole-source aquifer system, advancing groundwater planning efforts, and aligning conservation, infrastructure, and growth strategies with long-term environmental stewardship.
- Strengthen interagency partnerships across the Island by building and maintaining collaborative relationships with partners to address shared challenges in housing, transportation, and emergency preparedness, among others, while advancing the City's best interests.



The Successful Candidate

The City Manager is committed to enabling a strong and inclusive City that evolves with intention and purpose. They are a collaborative and forward-thinking leader who embodies strong communication and decisive leadership, while upholding trust and accountability. The successful candidate has a strong history of developing relationships with elected officials and effectively supports the Mayor and City Council by providing sound advice and guidance. As a professional and resilient ambassador, the City Manager thoughtfully navigates complex community dynamics, addresses conflict with diplomacy and respect, and approaches criticism with composure and openness, all while maintaining a strong commitment to Bainbridge Island's long-term success.

The successful City Manager embraces the community's unique character, builds deep connections, and demonstrates a genuine desire to be present by showing up in ways that ensure residents feel valued and heard. They are socially aware and attuned to the differing perspectives throughout the community and navigate viewpoints with empathy, diplomacy, and respect. They are a confident yet humble leader and possess the political acumen necessary to navigate a passionate and engaged community while remaining politically neutral and unbiased. The City Manager routinely fosters meaningful dialogue and strengthens the connection between the City and the community it serves.

A person of high integrity, the City Manager models ethical public service, follows proper processes, and demonstrates strong stewardship of public resources. The successful candidate has a strong financial background and a deep commitment to financial sustainability. They are transparent, trustworthy, and committed to good government, ensuring that policies adopted by the Council are implemented effectively, responsibly, and in alignment with the community's long-term interests. With a commitment to innovation and continuous improvement, the City Manager harnesses data, analytics, and technology to inform decisions, identifies emerging trends and challenges, and implements best practices that advance efficiency, collaboration, and high-quality service delivery. The City Manager is both a strategic thinker and an effective implementer, while maintaining flexibility to meet the changing, growing needs of the community.

The City Manager builds and supports a strong internal organizational culture. Through collaboration and servant-leadership principles, they empower staff, respect subject-matter expertise, and encourage employees at every level to contribute ideas and perspectives. The City Manager actively listens to staff, checks in regularly, and fosters a culture of openness that ensures effective communication throughout the organization. By investing in professional development, supporting cross-departmental collaboration, and recognizing that leadership exists throughout the organization, the City Manager strengthens morale and builds a resilient, high-performing workforce.

Above all, the City Manager is drawn to Bainbridge Island not as a stepping-stone, but as a community they are genuinely excited to serve, invest in, and call home.

Qualifications

Ten years of progressively responsible experience in municipal government, including at least seven years of administrative or leadership responsibility, is required. A successful track record as a City Manager or Deputy/Assistant City Manager is strongly preferred. An exceptional ability to develop effective relationships with a history of working closely with a Mayor and City Council is essential. Prior experience in land use, planning, development, and affordable housing is ideal. A sound financial background with a strong understanding of budgets and financial management is required. Preference will be given to candidates who share Bainbridge Island's commitment to environmental stewardship, sustainability, and resilience.

A bachelor's degree in public administration, business administration, public policy, finance, or a similar field is required. A master's degree in public administration, public policy, or a closely related field is desired. An equivalent combination of experience and education that enables success as the City Manager will be considered. The City Manager will embrace life as an active member of the Bainbridge Island community, including establishing residency within the City.

Studies have shown that women and people of color are less likely to apply for jobs unless they believe they can perform every job description task. We are most interested in finding the best candidate for the job, and that candidate may come from a less traditional background.

Inside the Organization

The City of Bainbridge Island is a non-charter code city operating under the council-manager form of government. The seven-member City Council serves as the legislative body, with representatives elected from three wards – North, Central, and South – and one at-large member. Councilmembers serve four-year terms. The City Council appoints the City Manager to serve as the organization's chief executive officer, responsible for implementing Council policies and overseeing the City's daily operations.

The City Manager leads a talented and dedicated workforce of approximately 141 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees who collaborate to provide services through several departments, including Executive, Finance and Administrative Services, Municipal Court, Planning and Community Development, Public Safety, and Public Works.

Bainbridge Island is a high-performing organization with a longstanding commitment to fiscal stewardship. The City has maintained a Moody's AAA bond rating since 2019, one of only a small number of Washington municipalities to achieve this distinction. For the 2025–2026 biennium, the City adopted an all-funds expenditure budget of approximately \$144.6 million, providing for continuity of service and continuing a tradition of consistency, predictability, and reliability. The organization also maintains a strong General Fund reserve policy of 25 percent of operating revenues and currently exceeds that benchmark.



The Community

Located just a scenic 35-minute ferry ride from downtown Seattle, Bainbridge Island offers a distinctive blend of vibrant culture and peaceful island living. A gateway to the Kitsap Peninsula, the 28 square mile island provides residents and visitors with a stunning natural backdrop that includes more than 50 miles of shoreline, 280 lane miles of roads, and sweeping views of the Olympic Mountains and Mount Rainier.

Home to approximately 25,000 residents, Bainbridge Island is located within the ancestral homelands of the Suquamish Tribe, a sovereign Tribal nation whose people have lived on and cared for these lands and waters for centuries. The City recognizes the deep and continuing connection between the Suquamish people and this place and values its government-to-government relationship with the Tribe as an important part of the island's present and future.

The community also takes pride in its history of reflection and reconciliation. Bainbridge Island was the first community from which Japanese Americans were forcibly removed following Executive Order 9066 during World War II. Today, the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial stands as a powerful reminder of the community's commitment to remembrance and the principle of "Nidoto Nai Yoni" ("Let it not happen again").

Education and quality of life are central to life on the island. The Bainbridge Island School District is consistently recognized as one of the top-performing districts in Washington and is known for its strong academic outcomes, robust arts programs, and engaged parent community. With a median household income of approximately \$170,000, the community benefits from a stable economy supported by maritime activities, small businesses, tourism, professional services, and innovative craft industries. Many residents commute to the greater Seattle region, and the Island maintains strong connections to Kitsap County.

Bainbridge Island is a vibrant cultural destination with an active arts scene and a growing local food and wine community. Residents and visitors alike enjoy a wide range of amenities, including the Bainbridge Island Museum of Art, the renowned Bloedel Reserve, and performances at Bainbridge Performing Arts. The island is home to numerous wineries, tasting rooms, farm stands, and locally owned shops and restaurants that contribute to a lively downtown.

Bainbridge Island is widely recognized for its strong civic engagement and commitment to environmental stewardship. Residents consistently work to preserve hundreds of acres of forests, meadows, trails, and working farmland, helping to protect the island's natural landscapes and rural character for generations to come. With natural harbors, local marinas, waterfront parks, and miles of trails, Bainbridge Island offers exceptional opportunities for outdoor recreation, from sailing and kayaking to hiking and cycling. Combined with its thriving arts community, strong schools, and close proximity to Seattle, Bainbridge Island provides an extraordinary quality of life and a uniquely dynamic place to live, work, and explore.





Compensation and Benefits

The City Manager's total compensation is at the discretion of the City Council and will be determined based on the successful candidate's qualifications. For a complete overview of the City's extensive benefits, review the detailed summary [here](#).

The new City Manager is required to establish residency on Bainbridge Island, with housing and/or relocation assistance offered as part of the new incumbent's employment agreement.



How to Apply

Applications will be accepted electronically by Raftelis at raftelis.com/opportunities. Applicants complete a brief online form and are prompted to provide a cover letter and resume. A first review of applications will begin on **May 4, 2026**, and early applications are highly encouraged.



Questions

For more information or questions regarding the City Manager position, please contact Heather Gantz at hgantz@raftelis.com. For accommodation requests during the application or interview process, please contact Kelsey Batt at kbatt@raftelis.com.