



CITY OF KIRKLAND

Deputy City Manager of Operations





The Position

Come see what makes Kirkland one of the best places to live, work, and play and help make it even better! The City is seeking an experienced municipal leader to serve as the Deputy City Manager of Operations (DCMO). The DCMO serves as the City's Chief Operating Officer. The ideal candidate is a seasoned professional with the energy and enthusiasm to help a high-performing organization achieve even more.

The DCMO serves as a key strategic and operational leader for the City of Kirkland, partnering closely with the City Manager, Deputy City Manager for External Affairs, and executive leadership team to advance the City's goals, priorities, and organizational philosophy. This position provides executive-level leadership in the management of City operations, helping ensure effective coordination across departments and translating organizational priorities into action. The DCMO provides management direction on City services and leads complex, citywide initiatives that require collaboration across departments, agencies, and community partners.

As a people-centered leader, the DCMO helps foster a high-performing, collaborative, and supportive organization. This includes attracting, retaining, developing, and motivating talented professionals, supporting department leadership and organizational performance, and promoting a workplace grounded in respect, diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. The DCMO serves as Acting City Manager when required and represents the City Manager on matters requiring executive leadership, ensuring continuity of effective City operations and leadership.

The Priorities

Guided by Kirkland's commitment to protecting and enhancing quality of life, the Deputy City Manager of Operations collaborates with the City Manager, Deputy City Manager for External Affairs, and leadership colleagues to translate the City Council's vision and priorities into meaningful results for the community. Bringing an enterprise-wide perspective, this leader aligns people and resources, strengthens organizational performance, and ensures clear accountability as the City advances the following priority areas.

- **Advance Community Safety and Resiliency:** Strengthen the organization's ability to deliver safe, responsive, and equitable services, including advancing voter-approved police and fire investments, continued expansion in crisis response, and sustaining a fair and just criminal justice system.
- **Shape Kirkland's Future Through Thoughtful Growth and Mobility:** Help advance the Comprehensive Plan and Transportation Strategic Plan while supporting thoughtful growth, mobility, housing, economic vitality, and the transformation of the NE 85th Station Area into a thriving, connected community.
- **Invest in Exceptional Infrastructure, Parks, and Community Amenities:** Guide organizational coordination around critical investments that sustain Kirkland's quality of life, including multimodal transportation, utilities and environmental infrastructure, the Public Works Maintenance Center, parks and recreation facilities, and other major community investments.
- **Advance Housing, Human Services, and an Inclusive Community:** Strengthen coordinated efforts to address homelessness, expand access to safe and stable housing, and advance Kirkland's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging through meaningful community-informed action.
- **Protect Kirkland's Financial Strength and Long-Term Sustainability:** Help balance current service needs with long-term priorities by supporting sustainable budgeting and funding strategies for streets, parks, human services, infrastructure, and other community investments while maintaining the City's financial stability and AAA credit rating. Ensure internal systems support the efficient and cost-effective achievement of City goals.
- **Strengthen Community Connection and Strategic Partnerships:** Build trust and connection through effective communication and meaningful community engagement, while cultivating partnerships across the public, private, nonprofit, and regional sectors to advance complex initiatives and deliver meaningful benefits to the Kirkland community.



The Successful Candidate

The Deputy City Manager of Operations is an accomplished municipal executive with the experience, judgment, and presence to serve as Kirkland's Chief Operating Officer and a trusted partner to the City Manager. A deep understanding of local government operations allows this leader to translate vision into results while balancing operational realities with policy direction, political considerations, regulatory requirements, and financial resources. With an ability to see both the details and the bigger picture, this leader connects issues across the organization and aligns people, resources, and priorities around effective service delivery.

Authentic, confident, and highly relational, the successful candidate thrives in a collaborative executive team and understands that effective leadership is grounded in partnership, trust, and collective success rather than title or visibility. As a trusted advisor to the City Manager and partner to the Deputy City Manager of External Affairs, this leader is also a valued resource to department directors and staff. A thoughtful listener who welcomes differing perspectives, the DCMO communicates with candor, transparency, and empathy, bringing sound judgment and political acumen to complex and sometimes controversial issues. The ability to have difficult conversations, provide honest advice, and respectfully challenge ideas builds the trust necessary for strong decision-making and organizational alignment.



An organized, action-oriented problem solver, the successful candidate understands how to move complex work forward in a large, interconnected organization. They create systems and structures to carry out key City projects and initiatives to a successful conclusion. Strong situational awareness, curiosity, and creativity support the ability to recognize emerging issues, connect the dots, and develop practical solutions. This leader respects effective processes while looking for thoughtful opportunities to improve them and has a demonstrated ability to influence without formal authority by building credibility, relationships, and alignment across departments and organizational boundaries. Resourceful and willing to take initiative, the successful candidate knows when to act, when to seek input, and when to adapt, evaluating circumstances, learning from experience, and pivoting when needed to achieve the best outcome.

Above all, the DCMO is genuinely committed to public service and to the people and community of Kirkland. Visible, accessible, and present, this leader builds strong relationships with department directors and employees while supporting their growth and development through authentic mentorship and coaching. An inclusive and caring leader, the successful candidate recognizes achievements, creates an environment of belonging, and brings energy, emotional intelligence, and a strong sense of ownership to the work. Excellent communication and presentation skills support effective representation of Kirkland with regional partners and external stakeholders, while the breadth and confidence to step into the City Manager role when needed provide continuity of leadership and service to the community.



Qualifications

Ten years of increasingly responsible experience in local government is required. Deep knowledge of the municipal services Kirkland provides is essential, as is the ability to quickly understand the City's political environment. Prior leadership experience overseeing complex services, programs, and projects is required. A strong understanding of internal services, especially Human Resources, Finance, and Information Technology, is essential.

A bachelor's degree in public administration or a closely related field is required. A master's degree is preferred. Any combination of relevant education and experience that demonstrates the individual's knowledge, skill, and ability to proficiently perform the essential duties and responsibilities will be considered. The selected candidate will need a valid Washington State Driver's license and remain insurable under the City's insurance.

Inside The Organization

The City of Kirkland is a full-service city with a 2025-2026 biennial budget of \$1.15 billion and approximately 781 FTEs. Kirkland operates under the Council-Manager form of government, with a seven-member City Council and Council-elected Mayor. The City Council establishes policy direction and community priorities, while the City Manager serves as the City's chief executive and leads the organization in carrying them out.

The City serves an engaged community and strives to be a responsive, innovative, and effective local government. The City is navigating many of the opportunities and challenges facing the broader Puget Sound region, including significant growth and redevelopment, housing, transportation and mobility, infrastructure investment, sustainability and climate resilience, economic development, and evolving community needs.

The City's department directors comprise a collaborative executive leadership team that works across organizational boundaries to advance Council priorities, solve complex problems, and deliver high-quality services. Kirkland places a strong emphasis on community engagement, strategic partnerships, innovation, accountability, and thoughtful long-range planning as it serves the community of today while preparing for the community's future needs.

The Community

Located on the northeastern shore of Lake Washington just ten miles east of Seattle, Kirkland combines a beautiful waterfront setting and strong neighborhood character with the energy and opportunity of one of the nation's leading technology and innovation regions. Home to approximately 95,000 residents, Kirkland offers an exceptional quality of life, with an extensive parks and recreation system, a vibrant downtown and waterfront, diverse neighborhoods, community events, arts and cultural venues, and convenient access to employment and other destinations throughout the Puget Sound region. Kirkland is also an important part of the Eastside economy, home to a diverse mix of businesses ranging from locally owned shops and restaurants to major employers, including a substantial Google campus and the Amazon Leo satellite production facility.





Why Kirkland

Ranked as one of the most livable cities in America, Kirkland is an attractive and inviting place to live, work, and visit. We have big city vision while maintaining a small-town, community feel. If you are a candidate with the desire to join an organization looking to innovate into the future, the City of Kirkland is the place for you! If you ask our employees why they love where they work, they will tell you about the great people, work environment, supportive leadership and City Council, and innovation.



Compensation and Benefits

The hiring range for the Deputy City Manager of Operations is \$202,509 - \$264,229 and will depend on the qualifications of the successful candidate. Kirkland offers a competitive executive benefits package designed to support the health, financial security, and well-being of employees and their families. The City provides 100% employer-paid medical, dental, and vision premiums for employees and dependents, along with a free employee health clinic, life and long-term disability insurance, and comprehensive retirement options. Additional benefits include generous vacation, sick leave, holidays, and management leave, as well as flexible spending and employee assistance programs, wellness resources, an onsite fitness center, and opportunities for community service. Employees also enjoy workplace perks such as free public transit, EV charging, parking, secure bike storage, and discounted childcare programs. For more information about Kirkland's comprehensive benefits package, please review our [Employee Benefits](#).



How to Apply

Applications will be accepted electronically by Raftelis at raftelis.com. Applicants complete a brief online form and are prompted to provide a cover letter and resume. The position will be open until filled with a first review of applications beginning **October 19, 2026**.



Questions

For more information or questions regarding Kirkland or the Deputy City Manager of Operations position, please contact Heather Gantz at hgantz@raftelis.com.