



— POSITION RE-OPENED —

City and Selected Candidate Failed to Reach Agreement.

CITY MANAGER

Apply by October 9, 2024

Located in Central Florida, and predating the civil war, the City of Fruitland Park is one of Florida's most beloved secrets. Known as "The Friendly City", residents enjoy a quiet, peaceful atmosphere. The neighborhoods and a rolling countryside are canopied with oak trees replete with Spanish moss. In this growing city, the old Florida feel is blended beautifully with the modern, and locals are delighted to call this place home. Fruitland Park is truly a great place to live, work, and play.

Fruitland Park is roughly 50 miles northwest of Orlando, 85 miles northeast of Tampa, and only 47 miles from the Gulf of Mexico. At a little over seven square miles, the city is part of Lake County. It is located on the western side of Lake Griffin on a small body of water referred to as "Dead River". The city truly has a southern charm feel about it, and while it may be small, it is flourishing.

Once you exit the busy main highway, U.S. 441, you'll find yourself in nice, quiet neighborhoods with beautifully maintained yards. There are many well preserved older houses and the area is peppered as well with more modern ones. The Villages, a relatively new planned residential community for



those over 55 years old extends into the city and accounts for approximately half of Fruitland Park's population. While residents have a variety of options for entertainment and recreation, most really embrace the Florida lifestyle, sunshine, and the area's history. City parks include a municipal pool, skate park, baseball fields, walking paths and more.

For outdoor enthusiasts, Lake Griffin State Park encompasses 620 acres of swampland and hardwood forests, which can be explored in several ways, as the park connects to Lake Griffin and Ocklawaha River. With 40 campsites, anglers and birders may want to bring a canoe or a kayak to explore Lake Griffin's marshes. The park also offers guided canoe, kayak, and pontoon boat tours. Additionally, there are two hiking trails totaling two miles in length. Before leaving the park, be sure to visit the state's second largest live oak tree, which is approximately 400 years old.

To the northwest is the Ocala National Forest, the second largest nationally protected forest in Florida. It covers 607 square miles with over 600 natural lakes and ponds. Established in 1908, it offers springs, streams, and lakes for fishing, canoeing, and water skiing. Swimming and snorkeling are popular in the crystal-clear water of Juniper Springs, Alexander Springs, Salt Springs, and Silver Glen Springs. There you can observe numerous fish, underwater vegetation, and cavernous springs. Sixty-seven miles of the Florida National Scenic Trail stretch through the Forest. The Paisley Woods Bike Trail is a challenging 22-mile-long bike ride.

With a short drive to the north, one will find abundant nightlife. Hot spots include Spanish Springs City Square with the World of Beer, McCall's Tavern, the Corkscrew Winery, and Gator's Dockside. Arts, and culture can be found at the Fruitland Park Historical Society Museum and Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center. At the Grand Oak Resort you will find equestrian events and carriage rides. Fruitland Park is also the home to the original Speedway Park which is oldest Dirt Kart Track in America. Its 1/8 mile clay oval kart track has hosted Saturday Night Dirt Kart Racing for Go Kart enthusiasts since opening in 1958.

If you like the big city lights, Orlando and Tampa beckon. Both have numerous cultural attractions, many options for professional sports and entertainment, and excellent

international airports. Further, the world's busiest cruise port by passenger volume is Port Canaveral – 90 minutes southeast. The 29th busiest is the Port of Tampa – the same travel time to the southwest. For family fun, Disney World, Universal Studios, and Sea World are about an hour away. Lesser known but a great place for young children is Legoland in Winter Haven, two hours to the south.

The best part of Fruitland Park is that residents are friendly and welcoming. Crime is minimal, fully 35% under the national average. Local medical care is excellent. The schools are well regarded. In fact, a brand-new elementary school is being built that will provide 21st century classrooms with modern technology, and all the amenities we have come to expect. Better yet, the community is affordable. The average Fruitland Park home's list price is \$353,000 with the low currently being \$29,000 for an 840 square foot manufactured home to \$1.5 million lakefront property on three acres. When exploring living options, homes can vary in style throughout the area from historic to new, waterfront or luxury. There's really something for everyone here.

Overall, you will not find a better place to be the city manager, so if you pride yourself on excellence, please dust off your resume and apply.

Table 1: Fruitland Park's Population Growth Over Time

Census	Population	Percent of Change
1930	270	—
1940	362	34.1%
1950	551	52.2%
1960	774	40.5%
1970	1,359	75.6%
1980	2,259	66.2%
1990	2,750	21.9%
2000	3,186	15.7%
2010	4,078	28.0%
2020	8,325	104.1%

Source: U.S. Decennial Census

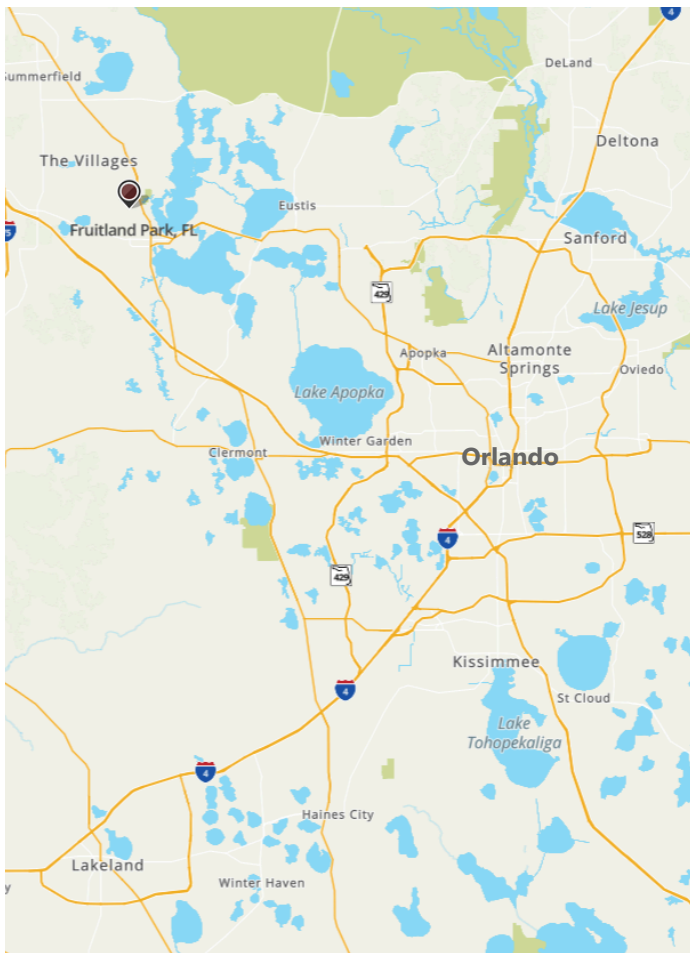


Figure 1: Location of the City of Fruitland Park, Florida

HISTORY

The city antedates the American Civil War. In the mid-1880’s, the earliest settlers planted citrus groves. After the big freeze in the mid-1890’s, many families from the north relocated to the Fruitland Park area for its promise of cheap land. On December 14, 1925, 40 registered voters unanimously voted to incorporate the Town of Fruitland Park.

Over the next 90 years, the population grew slowly (see Table 1 on page 2) until 2013 when the Villages of Lake-Sumter Inc. purchased property in and near Fruitland Park for \$8 million to expand its 55+ retirement community. Subsequently, the company began the annexation and rezoning process with the city. The property is currently the site of over 2,000 new homes. The project added 4,000 residents in a two-year period, thereby doubling the number of residents who called Fruitland Park home. The city continues to grow with several new subdivisions in various stages of construction.

Table 2: Fruitland Park, FL Demographics

Distribution by Race		Distribution by Age	
White	81.2%	0 to 15	15.1%
Black	7.9%	15 to 25	9.7%
Asian	1.7%	25 to 45	16.8%
Native American	0.3%	45 to 65	27.5%
Other	8.9%	65 to 85	29.0%
Total	100.0%	Over 85	1.9%
Hispanic Ethnicity (all races)	8.3%		
2021 Estimated Population: 8,615			

Educational Achievements (25 & Over) and Other Statistics	
High School or Higher	94.5%
Bachelor’s Degree or Higher	32.4%
Median Age—Fruitland Park	56.0
Median Age—U.S.	38.9
Median Household Income—Fruitland Park	\$70,167
Median Household Income—U.S.	\$74,580
Poverty Rate	8.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

DEMOGRAPHICS

The most notable aspect of its demographics is the skewing toward an older population due to the presence of the previously mentioned Villages. See Table 2 for more information.

CLIMATE

Fruitland Park’s climate is characterized as humid subtropical. Winters there are mild with high temperatures around 70°F and lows around 50°F. Summertime temperatures routinely have highs in the low 90s and lows in the mid-70s. Most of the area’s annual 51 inches of rainfall occurs during the summer.

The area experiences 233 sunny days per year (US average is 205). Hurricanes strike the area from time to time but are generally diminished in strength by the time they reach Fruitland Park, and rarely cause more than foliage damage.

GEOGRAPHY

Fruitland Park is located in Central Florida and lies in the northwest corner of Lake County. It is bounded on the north by the Town of Lady Lake, east by Lake Griffin State Park, south by Leesburg, and west by Sumter County. The city covers a total area of 7.29 square miles. The area is an average of 87 feet above sea level, and the terrain is composed of gently rolling hills. See Figure 1 on page 3 for a map depicting the location of Fruitland Park.

COMMERCE

Table 3 below provides information on the principal employers in Fruitland Park.

THE GOVERNMENT

The city is governed by a five-member commission. Each member represents a geographic district and is elected by its residents. Members serve staggered four year terms with elections coinciding with the national elections. The next election will be a primary in August 2024, followed by the general election in November 2024 where voters will elect candidates for three seats. The mayor and vice mayor are selected

Table 3: Principal Employers, Fruitland Park, FL

Employer	Industry	Employees
Walmart	Retail	310
Munn’s Heating & Air	HVAC	148
Bill Bryan Chrysler	Automotive	110
Fruitland Park Elementary School	Education	110
City of Fruitland Park	Government	97
Phillips Buick/Pontiac	Automotive	90

Source: Fruitland Park, FL 2022 CAFR

from the Commission by its members. The city does not have term limits. The commission members work well together, and all are committed to the best interests of the community. They are fiscally conservative and by and large like each other and respect the staff.

The commission appoints the city manager and the city attorney. Both are contract employees and can be removed by a simple majority vote. The city manager is the chief executive officer and is responsible for managing the city’s day-to-day affairs. The city attorney provides advice on legal matters.

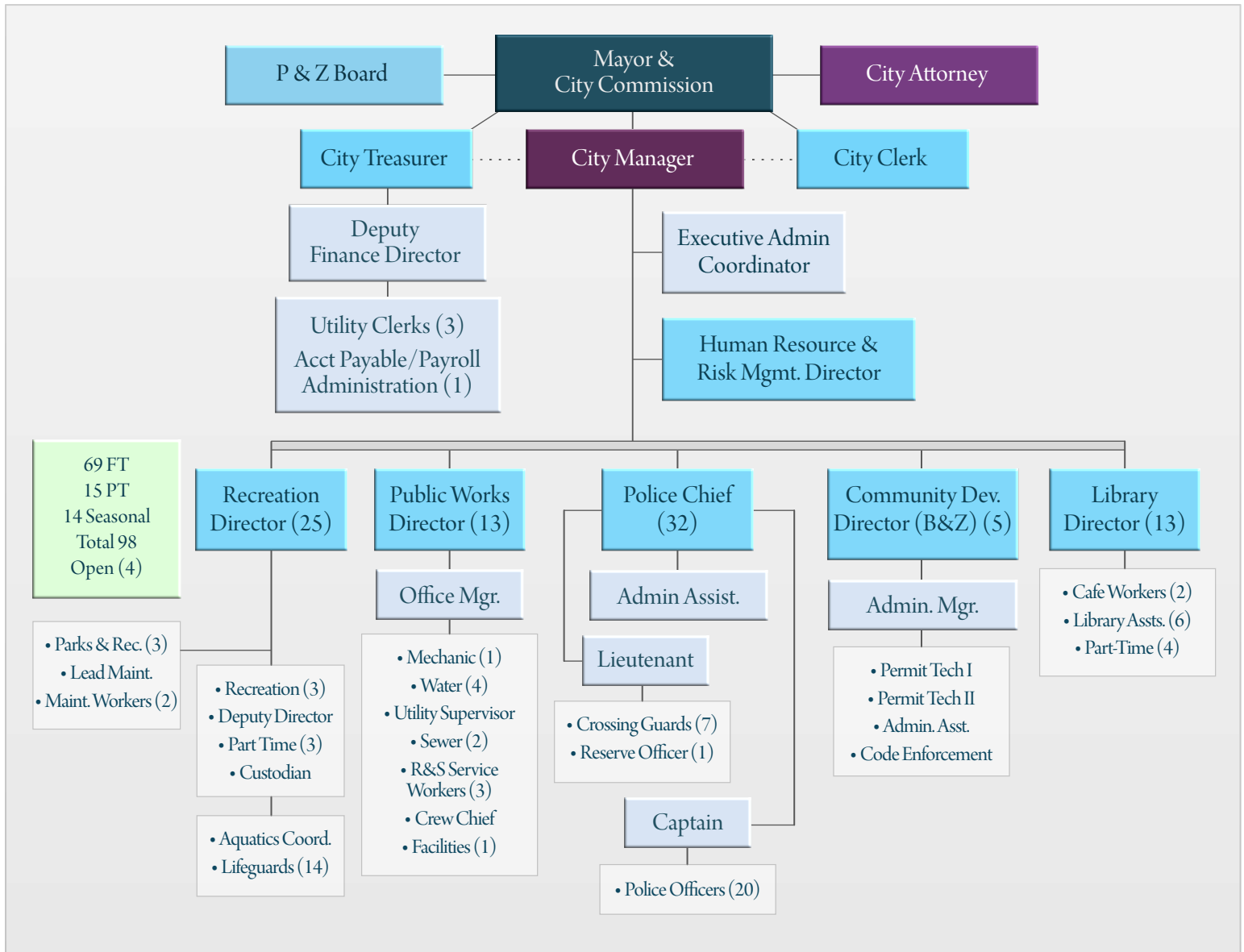
The city provides all the typical services of a full-service community except fire/rescue (which is provided through the county). Overall, Fruitland Park has 98 staff positions. Approximately a quarter of the employees (29 EEs) are in police while the remainder are spread among community development (6 EEs), general government (10 EEs), library (12 EEs), public works and utilities (14 EEs), recreation (25 EEs). See Figure 2 on page 5 for the city’s organizational chart. None of the city’s employees are unionized.

Financially, the city is in excellent condition and has about \$4 million in debt for sewer lines. The FY 2023/2024 General Fund budget is \$11,171,489 and the total budget is \$17,166,387.

THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

First, the city is very strong financially. Its physical plant is in very good condition. In just the past few years, it has constructed a new public works building and library and will be constructing a public safety facility – all without taking on any debt. Needless to say, it has budgeted its money wisely. Its staff is strong, and the city operates efficiently and effectively. That said, as with virtually every local governmental entity, Fruitland Park’s resources are limited and must continue to be managed wisely. While nothing is broken, the next manager will want to work with the staff to review current operations and ensure that processes are optimized. He/she will also

CITY OF FRUITLAND PARK ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



want to review all current plans to ensure they embody a shared vision for the community.

The second issue is growth. Land is available for development both within the city limits and adjacent to it. Opportunities are particularly ripe for commercial enterprises along U.S. Highway 27/441 and County Road 446A. The city also currently has lots platted for between 1,200 and 2,000 homes and has additional land nearby that can be annexed. That said, Fruitland Park does not want just any development, it wants quality development. At the same time, it wants to retain its pleasant, friendly, small-town feel. Thus, as development comes, it will need to be balanced in a

way that protects what is already there but offers both more housing and commercial conveniences.

Finally, at one time, Fruitland Park had a wastewater treatment plant, but it was poorly designed and could not be salvaged. The best solution was to demolish it, and contract with the nearby Town of Lady Lake to process Fruitland Park's sewage. The 10-year agreement expires in October 13, 2026. While not of immediate concern, the agreement will need to be extended for another ten years. In a related matter, Fruitland Park is working with Lady Lake to bring reclaimed water to the city. That will help alleviate the need to apply for an amendment to the Fruitland



Park's consumptive use permit to support future development in the community.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

Fruitland Park is looking for a strong, professional manager with a steady hand to help guide the community. The ideal candidate will partner with the city commission as a supporter and a trusted advisor. The commission does not want a "yes" person, but someone who will give his/her honest opinion diplomatically. The individual will be comfortable telling the commission what it needs to hear, not what it wants to hear. The manager will understand politics but not become involved in them. The ability to anticipate/resolve issues before they become problems is critical. Good judgment and common sense are essential.

The next city manager will have excellent verbal and written communication skills. He/she will recognize, however, that often the most important aspect of communication is listening and truly hearing what others have to say. The individual will ensure everyone feels their views are understood. Being respectful, clear, and concise will be important.

The individual will strongly believe in transparency. She/he will be very open and approachable. The best candidate will not manage from behind a desk but be in the field and in the community. The manager will constantly seek ways to make the government more responsive. Customer service will be a core principle and a way of life. The individual will lead by example and diligently work with businesses and citizens to resolve their issues. When he/she cannot find a solution, the manager will provide a well-reasoned explanation of why the city cannot help.



The ideal candidate will be a team-builder and delegator who encourages creativity. The individual will hire great people. He/she will then mentor and give assignments, set broad performance parameters, and step back. At the same time, the manager will expect results and hold employees accountable. An eye for detail will be important. When it is time to make a decision, the manager will not hesitate.

Critical thinking will be important. The next manager will need to bring a fresh set of eyes to the organization. The individual will constantly ask why, and expect well-reasoned responses, not that “we have always done it this way.” The current processes may be the best way, but that will need to be demonstrated, and everyone should understand why.

Personally, the manager will be intelligent, friendly, outgoing, organized, positive and responsive. She/he will have a “can do” attitude and a sense of humor. The best candidate will be practical, flexible, consistent, cheerful, and values driven. Being completely honest and having the utmost integrity will be critical. A good sense of humor is a plus, especially when it is used to diffuse tense situations. Remaining calm and maintaining his/her composure in emergencies is important.

The ideal candidate will have at least five years’ experience in local government and five years as a city manager or assistant. A bachelor’s degree is expected. A master’s degree in public administration or related field is preferred. In terms of specific skills, the individual will have a demonstrated track record of achievement in management, finance, and development. Skills in intergovernmental relations will be important. Emergency management experience is critical. While tropical storms rarely have a significant impact on the city and are not frequent, Fruitland Park wants to be prepared. Florida experience is a plus but not required.

The City hopes and expects the next manager will honor the prior manager’s commitment and stay five to ten years.

COMPENSATION

The salary will range from \$120,000 to \$187,200 and will depend on qualifications. Benefits are excellent.

THE MOST RECENT CITY MANAGER

The current city manager is retiring in late September of this year (2024) after 10 years with Fruitland Park.

RESIDENCY

The city manager is not required to be a resident of Fruitland Park, but it is preferred, and why would he/she want to live anywhere else?

HOW TO APPLY

E-mail your cover letter and resume to Recruit42@cb-asso.com. Apply as soon as possible, we will be screening resumes upon receipt, but by October 9, 2024 at the latest. Questions should be directed to Colin Baenziger at (561) 707-3537 or Scott Krim at (801) 628-8364.

INTERNAL CANDIDATES

No internal candidates applied the last time and we do not expect any this time.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Unless exempted by state or federal law, once an application is submitted, it is deemed a public record. As a practical matter, our searches generally do not receive any media coverage until after the semi-finalists are named, and often not even then.

THE PROCESS

Applications will be screened between October 10th and November 14th. Finalists will be selected on November 14th. A reception and interviews will be held on November 22nd and 23rd. A selection will be made shortly thereafter.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The City of Fruitland Park is an Equal Opportunity Employer and strongly encourages women, minorities, and veterans to apply.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For additional information about the city, visit:

fruitlandpark.org

lakecountyfl.gov/home

floridastateparks.org/parks-and-trails/lake-griffin-state-park

