



## City Manager Position Open - Apply by March 2, 2015



Welcome to Mill Creek! If you are an outstanding, seasoned professional with experience at the highest levels of city government and seeking a beautiful and progressive community to be a City Manager, Mill Creek is looking for you.

Located 20 miles north of downtown Seattle, Mill Creek is one of the true treasures in the metropolitan area and the Pacific Northwest. It was originally developed as a golf course community in the 1970s and is exceptionally well-planned. Though it is much larger now, it has retained its country-club atmosphere and its small town charm.

Parks and trails have always been a hallmark of the City with miles of nature trails including the scenic North Creek Trail that runs from McCollum Park south to the southern city limits. In addition, nine attractive neighborhood parks provide recreational opportunities for the residents.



One of the community's highlights is the Mill Creek Town Center. Named "the best lifestyle center in Washington State" in 2013, it is composed of a series of pedestrian plazas in a park-like setting. It is a showcase that other communities frequently visit and use as a model they then attempt to duplicate. Featuring over 80 locally owned and franchised retail businesses and services, the Town Center is a community gathering place and a destination for many in the metro Seattle area.

Mill Creek is served by the Everett Public School District, which is one of the best in the state. The City has an elementary school, a middle school and a high school all within its boundaries, and all are very well regarded. Seven excellent colleges and universities are found within a 17 mile radius with a combined enrollment of more than 57,000 students.

Mill Creek is not far from the Puget Sound and the snow-capped peaks of the Cascade Mountains. Thus, the surrounding area boasts tremendous outdoor opportunities. Boating and alpine and cross-country skiing can be found within a relatively short drive. Nationally ranked year-round golf courses are also in the vicinity.

The City is primarily residential and composed of a mix of single-family homes, townhomes, and apartments set in a lushly landscaped environment. The median home price is approximately \$450,000 (for a four bedroom, three bath, 2,800 square foot home). A reasonably nice home can be had for as little as \$320,000 or you can spend over \$1,000,000 for homes in an exclusive neighborhood.

Aside from the landscape, buildings and shopping, it is the people who inhabit it and define its character and personality. Even a casual visitor will soon notice the residents care about their city and their fellow citizens. The Town Center and the City's many parks and open spaces are frequented by singles, couples, and families. The senior center and recreation



department’s pre-school are in the same building. Mill Creek is a real community!

In short, Mill Creek offers a hometown atmosphere with many of the amenities and culture of urban living. So if you are a seasoned professional city manager or assistant and looking for a great place to be, we invite you to apply.

## History

Mill Creek had its beginnings in 1973 with a master plan envisioning a golf-course-based community.

Mill Creek soon became a sought after place to live. In 1983 the area’s residents decided to become a city. They wanted to control their own destiny and to ensure municipal services were provided at levels commensurate with their desires. With a population of 3,549 at its incorporation, it grew to 8,270 by 1990, 11,525 by 2000 and 18,244 by 2010. At the same time the City grew from less than two square miles to its present four square miles.

## Demographics

Mill Creek’s current population of 18,828 is characterized by both young families and seniors. The cross-section of residents is a testament to the livability of Mill Creek populated by young adults, families and seniors, many of whom have grown up here and have chosen to retire in this community. The median age is 40.5 which is somewhat above the national median age of 37.2. 74% of the population is classified as Caucasian, 17% as Asian, 2% African American with the remainder being some other race or two or more races. Hispanics (of all races) compose just under 6% of the population. 63% of the housing units are owner occupied, and average household size is 2.4 persons. The average family size is three persons. Of those persons 25 and older, 96% have a high school diploma and 49% have a Bachelor’s degree or higher. The

average family income is \$101,061 with only 5% of all families falling below the poverty level.

## Climate

Mill Creek’s climate is temperate and relatively mild as can be seen from Table I.

The area’s reputation for rainy days comes from the frequency and not the total accumulated rainfall. In fact, its annual average rainfall is approximately 36 inches, less rain than what is received in New York, Atlanta, or Houston.

## Commerce

Mill Creek was conceived as a high-end residential community and very little land was set aside for industrial or manufacturing uses. Employment was considered to be something offered elsewhere, and it has been only relatively recently that local employment options have been developing. At the present time, more than 4,000 jobs exist in the City. They tend to be retail and located primarily along the major arterials. Major employers in Mill Creek are businesses such as Albertson’s Food, Central Market, Lowe’s and Safeway. The City’s April 2012 Strategic Plan found the City’s labor force to be 7,334 of which only 284 lived and worked in Mill Creek. In other words, more than 7,000 residents traveled to other parts of Snohomish County and King County for employment. It is a regional economy driven by, among other things, aircraft design and manufacturing, high tech, and biomedical.

## The Mill Creek Community Association

A discussion of Mill Creek would be incomplete without mentioning the Mill Creek Community Association (MCCA). It is the original homeowners association that

Table I: Climate data for Mill Creek, Washington

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year
Average High °F	46	48	52	56	62	66	71	72	76	58	49	44	55
Average Low °F	37	37	40	43	47	51	55	55	52	45	40	36	45
Precipitation Inches	4.1	3.3	3.4	2.6	2.3	2.1	1.0	1.1	1.7	3.3	6.1	5.3	36.1

Weatherbase



maintained large portions of the community prior to incorporation. It continues to do so today. As such its work is complimentary to that of the City and contributes to the beauty and appeal of Mill Creek. With a membership of about 10,000, more than half the population of Mill Creek are members of the MCCA. It is comprised of more than three dozen separate divisions consisting of single-family homes, townhomes, condominiums, and apartments. Owners of these properties compose the voting membership of the Association.

The MCCA owns and maintains over 160 acres of common areas, including a large nature preserve, playgrounds and parks complete with trails, sidewalks, and paths. The Association has its own permanent employees who handle the administrative, security, and maintenance responsibilities, but the organization itself is run by a large number of volunteers who serve on the Board of Directors, and the various committees. An annual fee is paid by all households to support the operations and maintenance within MCCA.

## The Government

Mill Creek is a non-charter code city operating as a Council-Manager form of government. The City is governed by a seven member City Council which appoints a Mayor and provides direction to the City Manager. The Councilmembers are elected to staggered four year terms. The next election is this November when three seats will be on the ballot. Every two years, the council selects one of its members to preside over meetings as Mayor. The position is ceremonial and has no more authority than any other Councilmember. The City's elected officials are bright and fiscally conservative. They all have the best interests of the City at heart. They understand their roles as policy makers and while they do not always agree, they are collegial and have a great deal of respect for the staff.

The City operates with a biennial budget, the latest of which began January 1, 2015. The General Fund budget for the 2015-2016 calendar years is approximately \$24 million, and the total budget for all funds is approximately \$50 million. The City is currently operating with an anticipated \$1.7 million operating deficit in the general fund budget for the biennium. If that were to continue into the future, the current reserve of \$6.5 million would be depleted in approximately seven years.

City provided services, in order of magnitude, are law enforcement, public works/streets services, community development, parks and recreation, and city administration. It also provides a storm water utility to protect water quality, prevent flooding, control storm water runoff, and rehabilitate stream and wildlife habitat. Mill Creek has a very lean government with only 62 FTEs (33 of which are police and 11 of which are public works). Its labor force is augmented by contractual services. Further, the efforts of the MCCA compliment the City's efforts.

Water, sewer, EMS, fire protection, and curb-side garbage, recycling and yard waste services are provided by third parties.

## The Strategic Plan and Challenges

Mill Creek does not have any urgent challenges that need to be dealt with immediately. In fact the City's challenges are articulated as goals in its 2012 Strategic Plan.

First and foremost the next manager will be expected to manage in a way that will maintain the community's character. Specifically the plan states, "...fiscal actions should never lose sight of what makes Mill Creek so attractive to its residents and businesses. Mill Creek's streets and neighborhoods are generally well maintained and feel safe, peaceful, beautiful and walkable to its residents and visitors. The community's character must be maintained, ensuring that whatever actions the City takes to be fiscally sustainable, it does not sacrifice what is precious."

The Plan's second goal relates to public facilities. The police department is squeezed into City Hall and needs additional space to keep up with population growth. The Strategic Plan also identified the need for a new public works facility and mentioned at least some citizen support for other community facilities, such as a multipurpose community center.

The third goal underscores the community's desire to have Mill Creek "...continue its high service levels, particularly in terms of law enforcement and parks and recreation programs. The community also appreciates the efficiency with which the City provides all its services. These levels of service should not be sacrificed."





The fourth goal is alluded to in the first three and that is financial. The current projected general fund budget deficit is sustainable in the short run but not in the long term. The next manager will be expected to bring a fresh set of eyes and identify ways to cure the situation. Creativity may be the key here.

The fifth goal is economic development and specifically the plan calls for “enhancing economic and employment opportunities”. The City is largely built out but some opportunities still exist. The first and most significant is the East Gateway Urban Village. Its sub-area plan calls for a model of mixed use, pedestrian-friendly development which is similar to the Mill Creek Town Center.

The sixth and final goal is to “Ensure that new growth and development is high quality and provides a benefit to Mill Creek.” This goal also applies to possible future annexations and works in concert with the first in terms of maintaining the community’s character.

It should be noted that the City has many long term employees – people have recognized Mill Creek as the wonderful place it is and have chosen to stay and contribute. The next City Manager will be in the unique position of hiring, developing, and shaping the City organization with the expected retirement of many of the senior staff within the next five years.

## The Ideal Candidate

The Mill Creek City Council is seeking a seasoned manager to work with it as a partner, a supporter and a trusted advisor. He/she will be a consensus builder who knows how to help everyone get to yes and will work closely with the Council implementing its priorities. The individual will understand the council/manager form of government. The Council understands that it should set policy while the manager should run the day-to-day operations. He/she must have demonstrated experience





working successfully with a City Council to establish a vision, identify goals, and collaboratively chart a course for the future. Further, while the manager will understand politics, he/she will not be involved in them.

Recognizing the importance of information, the manager will present not just the preferred option but all the options along with their respective costs and benefits and then support the Council in the decisions it makes. At the same time, the Council does not want someone who is a “yes person.” Rather the individual will be comfortable telling the elected body what it needs to hear and not necessarily what it wants to hear. The selected candidate will do so diplomatically and in the appropriate setting.

The next manager will be someone of high integrity who believes in transparency. The individual will be one of the City’s primary representatives. As such he/she will be an outstanding communicator and someone who realizes listening is an important part of communicating. He/she will be able to relate complex concepts in terms that are easily understood by everyone – the elected officials, residents, members of the business community, and staff. Of particular importance will be keeping the Council and the public informed concerning how the City’s money is being spent so they understand it is being spent wisely.

Mill Creek is a high-end community that expects the best. As such the manager will place a high degree of importance on delivering high quality services. He/she will also believe strongly in outstanding customer service and lead by example. The manager will realize the customer is not always right but does deserve a reasonable explanation for why something cannot be done. Further, the selected candidate will work diligently to find other, legitimate ways to achieve the resident’s desires if that is possible.

The selected candidate will be a leader – not a bureaucrat. The individual will be someone

who is supportive of staff but who also requires accountability. He/she will be a strong manager, mentor, and a coach who sets high standards and expects them to be met. When a project is assigned, the manager will ensure the necessary resources are provided and then expect the deadline to be met.

As noted, resources are limited so the individual will be expected to critically examine current operations with an eye towards improving efficiency. As a result, the individual will have strong analytical skills and understand how to apply current technology to reduce resource demands. Public/private partnerships may also play a role in conserving resources so experience working with the business community is a plus.

Since a number of the City’s department directors will likely retire in the next five years, the manager must have a good eye for talent and competence and hire those individuals who will continue the tradition of excellence in Mill Creek.



The Council would like someone who is intelligent, upbeat, friendly, outgoing, organized, positive– someone with a “can do” attitude. The ideal candidate will not be easily discouraged, and will be optimistic about the future, positive, and resilient. The City is looking for someone who will solve problems and build consensus without being controversial. Hence, common sense and strong people skills will be necessary.

The City is looking for someone with specific work experience in city government with an operational understanding of budgeting and city finances. Experience in overseeing land use planning, public works, economic development and revitalization efforts, and collective bargaining is a must. The City would like to play a larger role in the region, so experience working with other local government agencies and regional organizations is desired. Experience working with Washington State agencies and the State Legislature will be a plus.

This position requires graduation from an accredited four-year college or university with major coursework in public or business administration or related field. A Masters in Public or Business Administration is preferred. Desired qualifications are at least five to seven years of direct municipal experience in a similarly sized organization as a city manager or administrator.

The City is looking for someone who will see the Mill Creek City Manager position as the wonderful opportunity it is and make a commitment to the City’s future.

## Residency

The selected candidate is not required to reside within the City limits.

## Compensation

The salary range for the City Manager is \$120,000 – \$160,000, DOQ.

Benefits include comprehensive medical, dental, vision and life insurance, vehicle allowance, professional development, public employee retirement system contributions, holiday, vacation and sick leave. The City has a 401(a) Social Security Replacement Plan (Municipal

Employees Benefits Trust) which means employees of the City of Mill Creek do not contribute to nor do they earn Social Security credit while employed with the city.

## The Position and Previous City Managers

The City Council is committed to finding the right person and to having that person stay a long time. The interim City Manager will not be applying.

## How to Apply

E-mail your resume to [Recruit37@cb-asso.com](mailto:Recruit37@cb-asso.com) by March 2, 2015. Faxed and mailed resumes will not be considered. Questions should be directed to John Darrington at (509) 823-5138 or Colin Baenziger of Colin Baenziger & Associates at (561) 707-3537.

## The Process

Applicants will be screened between March 3rd and April 7th. Finalist interviews are scheduled for April 16th and 17th with a selection shortly thereafter.

## Confidentiality

Applications will be kept confidential until the finalists are approved by the City Council. At that point, it is anticipated that the names will be released to the public.

## Other Important Information

The City of Mill Creek embraces diversity and encourages women and minorities to apply. It is also a drug-free, smoke-free workplace.

COLIN BAENZIGER  ASSOCIATES  
EXECUTIVE RECRUITING