



# Welcome to the City of Sammamish, WA

Public Works Director Position Open - Apply by February 12, 2016



*Estimated Population: 60,000*

Sammamish, a quiet bedroom city approximately 20 miles due east of Seattle, was simply referred to as “The Plateau” for many years. Now, Sammamish is known for being one of the most affluent cities in King County, for truly exceptional schools and for highly educated residents. It is a vibrant and diverse community that is one of the safest cities in the country. To top it off, it is surrounded by the Northwest’s fabulous scenery!

This delightful city lies along the eastern shore of Lake Sammamish and is ideally located for those interested in technology. Redmond, home to Microsoft headquarters, is eight miles northwest and Bellevue, known as the tech center of the area, is a relatively easy 25 minute commute to the west. A bit further west, although the traffic can be challenging, is Seattle.

Over the past two decades, the area surrounding Lake Sammamish has been one of the most rapidly growing in the Pacific Northwest. In 2000, the city’s population was a little over 34,000. In 2014, the Census Bureau estimated it to be just over 51,200. On January 1st the Klahanie area was added through annexation bringing the city’s population to more than 60,000.

The city of Sammamish was incorporated in August of 1999 and immediately set about changing the face of the community. It has spent \$200 million on road improvements and parks upgrades,



purchased 450 acres of open space, built a new city hall and will be completing a new community and aquatic center this spring. It is also creating a downtown, the Town Center, where residents can gather, shop, eat, mingle, recreate, work and live. Another \$90 million in transportation improvements are planned in the next six years.

Sammamish's efforts have not gone unnoticed. In 2007, Money Magazine named the city the 11th 'Best Place to Live' among small towns from coast to coast. CNN Money magazine's 2011 review of the best places to live in the United States ranked it 15th, and Forbes named it the Friendliest Town in the United States in 2012. The future definitely looks bright for this city.

The people in Sammamish want the best for their community. A third of the population is under the age of 18 and many families have chosen to live here due to its two excellent school districts, Issaquah and Lake Washington. Both are ranked as 5-star plus. The market's perception of the community's quality is reflected in the median home sale price of \$659,200 (per Zillow.com). The city has excellent medical facilities and a new state-of-the-art hospital is located about 10 minutes away in nearby Issaquah. Sammamish is home to its own symphony and has hosted three major PGA golf tournaments at the Sahalee Country Club (1998 PGA Championship, the 2002 NEC World Golf Championship and the 2010 US Senior Open). Later this year, the KPMG Women's PGA Championship will be held at the Club.

Sammamish has three significant lakes, a large portion of Lake Sammamish and Pine and Beaver Lakes, lie within its boundaries. No motorized boats are allowed on Pine Lake and Beaver Lake so they are a haven for summer swimming or playing on the beach (or dock) in a calmer environment. Lake Sammamish serves as a regional playground for boaters and swimmers, alike.

Aside from its spectacular environment, the best part of Sammamish is its people. It is a diverse community where everyone values the city's small town feel, is very friendly and works to create a safe environment. You will see children walking to and from school, and riding their bikes everywhere. Residents love living here and will tell you it's the best place they have ever lived. They hasten to add that their neighbors are among the kindest on earth—reaching out to help one another without hesitation.

Just south of the city is Lake Sammamish State Park, a 512 acre day-use park with 6,858



feet of waterfront on the lake. Its many activities include rowing, waterskiing, wakeboarding/surfing, tubing and jet skiing. A popular lake event is “Pirates vs. Vikings” where participants dress in costume and participate in a massive water balloon fight between boats. A party follows on a floating dance floor. For the more naturally inclined, the park provides deciduous forest and wetland vegetation providing visitors with opportunities for hiking, birding, and exploring. A salmon-bearing creek and a great-blue-heron rookery are additional features that visitors can enjoy.

A bit further away (45 minutes) are the Cascade Mountains and there you can enjoy outdoor activities in both the summer and winter. Also relatively nearby to the west are the Puget Sound and the Olympic Mountains and to the southeast is Mount Rainier. It is one hour to skiing, two hours to the ocean and only three hours to Portland, Oregon or Vancouver, British Columbia. Needless to say, a multitude of outdoor activities surround the area that you can enjoy while still living in the temperate climate (with relatively little snow) which characterizes the Plateau of Sammamish.

In fact, Sammamish has so much to discover and enjoy that you may never choose to leave. However, should the big city beckon or the travel bug bite, Seattle is just over a half-hour (assuming no traffic) to the west! There you will find the Seattle Symphony Orchestra (which is among the nation’s most recorded), the Seattle Opera and the Pacific Northwest Ballet. Sprinkled throughout Seattle are over two dozen theater venues. For those who enjoy spectator sports, the Seahawks (of the NFL), Mariners (MLB), Sounders (MLS), and Storm (WNBA) are well known – not to mention the University of Washington and its well-respected Huskies. Seattle is also a major travel hub where you can catch flights to travel anywhere in the country, or abroad. The cruise port offers trips to Alaska and other destinations. Just remember your passport!

Although you will most likely enjoy your vacation and time away, soon you will be ready to come home. And after traveling to another city, or the other side of the world – you will probably find that everything you hoped for, and wanted, has been right here in your own backyard in hospitable, cheerful and wonderful Sammamish!

## History

The Sammamish people were a Coast Salish Native American tribe in the Sammamish River Valley in central King County, Washington. Europeans from the Hudson's Bay Company arrived in the area in 1832. In 1855, the United States government signed the Treaty of Point Elliott with most of the Puget Sound tribes. Some did not accept the Treaty and after the brief Puget Sound War, the Sammamish People were relocated to reservations.

Serious settlement began on the Plateau in the 1870s and 1880s. By the 1890s logging was becoming a major industry in the area, and for many years the area was characterized

by small farms, some large chicken and dairy farms, and several logging mills. By the 1930s the area was “logged out” and resorts began to develop.

The area’s real growth began in the mid-1970s and by the mid-1980s was accelerating dramatically as Seattle’s suburbs sprawled eastward. Around 1984 the Plateau’s population passed 10,000. Local residents were complaining that the growth was unchecked and King County was not providing the appropriate services. Many felt the answer was to become their own city and, in 1999, 63% of the citizens voted in favor of incorporation. Growth became more orderly and a real sense of community began to be established.

## Climate

Sammamish’s climate is described as oceanic with mild wet winters and warm dry summers. The city has four distinct but relatively mild seasons. The average high in December is 45° F and 76° F in July, while the average low varies from 34° in December to 54° in July. The city experiences approximately 200 cloudy days a year and is partly cloudy for another 90+ days. The area’s reputation for rainy days comes from the frequency (it rains on average a little over 150 days per year) and not the total accumulated rainfall. In fact, its annual average precipitation is approximately 35 inches, less rain than what is received in New York (50 inches), Atlanta (50 inches), or Chicago (39 inches).

## Geography

Sammamish covers 24 square miles. The city is located on the east bank of Lake Sammamish and sits on a plateau about 450 feet above sea level. Seattle is approximately 20 miles to the west. The city features a landscape of trees and lakes (Lake Sammamish, Beaver Lake and Pine Lake). Mountains are easily viewed in the distance on a clear day.

## Demographics

Sammamish’s population was 45,780 per the 2010 Census. With the annexation of the Klahanie area on January 1, 2016, it has risen to more than 60,000. The median household income was recently estimated to be \$169,859. The per capita income for the city was \$55,550. According to the 2010 Census the city had 15,546 households, and 12,918 families residing within its boundaries. The population density is 2,512.6 inhabitants per square mile. (See page 4 for Table 1: Sammamish Demographics.)

Sammamish has a very small commercial base (see Table 2: Sammamish Principal Employers, on page 4) and is primarily a residential community. Its population generally commutes to employment in nearby cities and often works in high tech.

Sammamish’s unemployment rate tends to be about half the national average and the Bureau of Labor Statistic reported it to be 2.9% in April 2015.

Table 1: Sammamish Demographics

Estimated Population: 60,000			
Racial Composition		Distribution by Age	
Caucasian	75%	0 to 17	32%
Asian	19%	18 to 24	5%
African American	1%	25 to 44	28%
Two or More Races	4%	45 to 64	29%
Hispanic Ethnicity	4%	Over 64	6%

Median Age	
Sammamish	38.2
Median Age - U.S.	37.2

Education (over age 25)	
High School or Higher	99%
Associates Degree or Bachelors Degree	54%
Graduate Degree	26%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 2: Sammamish Principal Employers

Employer	Function	Employees
Issaquah School District	Education	439
Lake Washington School District	Education	425
Safeway	Grocery Store	475
Sahalee Country Club	Country Club	150
QFC (Kroger)	Grocery Store	110
Columbia Athletic Club @ Pine Lake	Fitness Club	100
Plateau Club	Country Club	100
Starbucks	Coffee House	82
City of Sammamish	Government	80.5
Eastside Catholic School	Education	80

Source: 2015-2016 Sammamish Biennial Budget

## The Government

Sammamish operates under the Council-Manager form of government, with a seven member City Council. They are elected at-large and serve staggered four year terms. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor are selected by the Council from among its members. The Council sets policy and appoints the City Manager and City Attorney (currently provided through a contract with a local municipal law firm). It also appoints members to advisory boards. Since incorporation, the City Council has been very stable. Although the members have their own ideas and opinions, they get along reasonably well. Its members believe strongly in transparency and being a regional leader. They have a high regard for City Staff. The current City Manager has been with the City for more than 15 years. He will retire at the end of February and will be replaced by the current Deputy City Manager who has also been with the City for roughly 15 years.

The City has a total expenditure 2015/2016 biennial budget of \$188.9 million and a general fund expenditure budget of \$87 million. It believes strongly in lean government and the budget for 2016 calls for only 90 full time equivalent employees (FTE) spread over five departments: Administrative Services, Community Development, Financial & Technology Services, Parks & Recreation and Public Works. Police services are provided via contract with King County Sheriff's Office and Fire Rescue is provided through an independent special consortium, Eastside Fire & Rescue. Water and sewer services are provided by two independent special districts. The City does not have any bargaining units representing its employees.

The City compensates its staff well and expects a great deal. Staff members pride themselves on working as a team.

They are very collaborative, collegial and cooperative. They also strive to support each other and do not tolerate silos. In many ways, that has been the key to the City's success. Resources can be placed where they need to be when they need to be there.

The City places a very high priority on meeting its residents' needs and conducts a biennial citizens' satisfaction survey. The most recent results (2014) were extremely positive. Nearly eight in ten residents agreed the City was "on the right track." Seven in ten were satisfied with the leadership of city government. Three in four survey participants were satisfied with management of the City's finances. Nearly



three in four agreed the City is "making good progress" on road improvements and nine in ten rated neighborhood streets as "excellent" or "good." Virtually everyone said they feel safe in their homes and neighborhoods. Needless to say, Sammamish's residents are very happy overall with the City and its government.

## The Public Works Department

The Public Works Department has many of the functions found in the traditional department. Specifically, it is responsible for Construction Engineering, Construction Project Management, Street & Sidewalk Maintenance, Surface Water Management, Equipment Rental and Replacement, Transportation, and Land Use Review. Its operating budget is \$22,552,753 and its capital budget is \$30,924,744. All told, it has 36 permanent staff and 21 seasonal. The majority of the staff are allocated to Surface Water Management and the Street Fund. The Public Works Director's salary is spread evenly across the General, Street and Surface Water Management Funds.

## Opportunities and Challenges

The City has been well-run and is financially sound. Its primary challenge in public works has been overcoming the infrastructure deficit the City faced when it incorporated. Indeed providing better roads, parks and facilities was one of the more significant reasons residents supported Sammamish becoming a city. As noted, much has already been accomplished. Still, more remains to be done. The key challenge for the new Public Works Director will be continuing the current success of the City's capital improvements while also ensuring the Department's day-to-day operations are carried out with excellence. That will involve not just monitoring staff but also contractors. Further complicating the situation is the fact the government is very lean and it will also be important that he/she finds time to consider and plan for the future.

## The Ideal Candidate

Sammamish desires an accomplished leader, who has a history of performance in managing a public works department of comparable size and complexity, including engineering, streets, surface water management and traffic control. The ideal candidate will have extensive experience overseeing large capital construction programs with limited staff. Knowledge of civil engineering as it pertains to the design, construction, and maintenance of municipal public works will be critical.



The next Public Works Director will be achievement-oriented and have a demonstrated command of the fundamentals and best practices in municipal public works administration. He/she will have experience in personnel and program management, including optimizing human and material resources. Knowledge of municipal finance and budgeting techniques as it applies to public works will be important as will knowledge of sources of external funding such as state and federal grant programs. Command of applicable federal, state, and local law is necessary. At the same time, while realizing rules and regulations are important, the individual will have a healthy disrespect for bureaucracy. His/her focus will be on getting the job done, properly, ethically and legally.

The ideal candidate will be committed to providing high quality customer service and have the ability to communicate and collaborate effectively with a variety of internal and external stakeholders. Outstanding communications skills – oral, written and listening – will be essential. The successful candidate will be expected to make presentations to the City Council and the community as well as work with those in the field. Consequently being able to translate complex concepts into plain English will be important. Openness, honesty, integrity and transparency will be the individual's core principles.

This job is not one that can be done from behind a desk. The selected candidate will set high standards for his/her staff and then work shoulder to shoulder with them to achieve the city's goals. Accountability will be important to the individual personally, for staff members and for contractors. Since contractors are used reasonably extensively, the Director will be very comfortable working with consultants and ensuring they produce a high quality product on time and within budget. He/she will hold their feet to the fire. Internally, the ideal candidate will create a positive working environment and serve as a mentor who works diligently to help staff members reach their full potential.

Competitive candidates will have a Bachelor degree in civil engineering, public administration, or a related field and seven (7) years' experience in public works administration with extensive supervisory, administrative, budgeting, and capital project implementation experience in local government or a regional office or firm that does considerable work for local government agencies. A Master's degree is desired in a similar discipline and other advanced training is desirable.

## Compensation

The salary range is \$112,391 to \$164,275. While the salary will depend on qualifications, the City will pay in the upper end of the range to get the right person. Benefits are excellent and the Director will be part of the Washington Public Employees Retirement System.

## The Most Recent Public Works Director

The most recent Public Works Director left to become the Public Works Director in the community where she lives.

## Residency

Residency within the city limits is not required or expected.

## How to Apply

E-mail your resume to [Recruit26@cb-asso.com](mailto:Recruit26@cb-asso.com) by February 12, 2016. Faxed and mailed resumes will not be considered. Questions should be directed to Colin Baenziger at (561) 707-3537 or David Collier at (772) 260-1858.

## The Process

After the closing date, Colin Baenziger & Associates will conduct an initial screening and complete its portion of the assignment when it forwards its recommendations to the city on February 22nd. The city will conduct additional screening and interviews and then make a selection.

## Other Important Information

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

## Additional Information

The following websites have additional, useful information that you may wish to consider:

<http://www.sammamish.us/>

<http://www.iinet.com/~shs/index.html>

<https://www.nerdwallet.com/blog/jobs/best-places-washington-job-seekers/>

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