



— POSITION AVAILABLE —

Deadline Extended - Looking for a Few More Great Candidates

CITY MANAGER

Apply ASAP but no later than March 14, 2025

Welcome to Wilmington, a city with beautiful riverfront views, lively arts and entertainment, and streets steeped in rich history. Situated between the Cape Fear River and the Atlantic Ocean, and located 93 miles southeast of Fayetteville and 58 miles southwest of Jacksonville, Wilmington is a gem. The City is rightly known as one of the “Most Charming River Towns In North Carolina” (WorldAtlas, 2023) and one of “The 15 Most Beautiful Coastal Towns In The South” (Southern Living, 2024). The perfect combination of small-town Southern charm with large city amenities, Wilmington is a treasure sure to provide something for everyone.

As a port city with bodies of water along its eastern and western borders, Wilmington offers a variety of water-based activities and sports. Both community members and travelers enjoy multiple opportunities to fish, kayak, surf, paddleboard, dive, and sail. After a full day of island and river cruises, many enjoy coming onshore to dine at one of several conveniently located restaurants or shop at the nearby boutiques. For those who prefer to spend a day on the sand, beaches closest to the area are Wrightsville Beach (6 miles east), Carolina Beach (12 miles south), and Kure Beach (16 miles south).



Nature lovers can also get their outdoor fill inland. Airlie Gardens is a must-see, with its seasonal butterfly house, birding tours, summer concert series, and over 75,000 azaleas. Named after the nearly 500-year-old massive, moss-covered Airlie Oaks, the Gardens have 67 acres of trails, formal gardens, and lakes to explore. The Stanley Rehder Carnivorous Plant Garden is another favorite. Though small, this Garden provides ADA accessible walkways lined with informational signs, observation decks, and exhibits of native Pitcher Plants and Venus Flytraps.

Wilmington itself boasts over 40 parks and 32 miles of trails. As the City's largest park, Greenfield Park's 250 acres provide ample room for hiking, kayaking, birding, fishing, and picnicking. A recent addition is the nCico Sports Park, which contains 11 athletic fields. Olsen Park also provides several athletic facilities (including a volleyball court and five lighted baseball and softball fields), as well as the Kiwanis Miracle Playground – the largest accessible playground in the southeast.

Active families and individuals can join the City's plentiful recreational programs. All ages and abilities are welcomed, as seen from youth athletic programs (like basketball leagues, youth summer camps, flag football, and homeschool sports) to adult programs specifically designed for those 55 years and older. Wilmington also has open gym schedules available for its Davis and MLK Community Centers. For those who need their tee time, the City maintains two highly-rated golf courses: Inland Greens and Wilmington Municipal, also known as "Muni." The Wilmington Municipal Golf Course was designed by Donald Ross in 1926 and provides the public with a championship 18 hole golf course, and is one of the highest regarded municipal golf courses in America.

Recognized for its large, 230-block historic district, Wilmington carries the weight of history. Numerous buildings and structures honor the City's rich heritage. For instance, Thalian Hall is listed on the National Register for Historical Sites as one of America's oldest continually operating theaters since its opening in 1858. This esteemed building displays a mixture of late-Victorian and classic revival architecture, earning it a spot as one of the "Best Movie Theaters in America" (Condé Nest Traveler, 2017). The Hall annually hosts over 500 events in its three venues, showcasing the unique blend of outside interactions and Wilmington's influence.

The City's #1 tourist attraction is Wilmington's Riverwalk. The Riverwalk stretches 1.75 miles along the bank of the Cape Fear River in historic downtown Wilmington. It has been named in the top 10 riverwalks across the country by USA Today over the last decade, and provides access to public parks, shopping, dining, and museums.

Another Wilmington spotlight is the Battleship USS North Carolina (BB-55). This monument was the first of 10 fast battleships to join World War II and was the highest decorated American battleship of the War. Presently decommissioned, the vessel is open daily for self-guided and guided tours amongst its 9 levels, gun turrets, sickbay, and collection of original materials. On Sept. 2, 2020, the City of Wilmington was officially named the first World War II Heritage City in the country. This national designation recognizes the countless contributions of the women and men who stepped into the workforce to support America's successful campaign during World War II. These individuals built hundreds of military vessels.

No stay is complete without visiting the City's museums, ranging from historical displays and scientific discovery to art exhibits and hands-on activities. Notable establishments include the Cape Fear Museum of History and Science and the Cameron Art Museum. Families also love spending a day at the Children's Museum, and history buffs greatly enjoy touring Wilmington Railroad Museum and Bellamy Mansion.

Throughout the year, the City hosts various festivals and events. April hosts the beloved North Carolina Azalea Festival. Held during peak azalea blooming season, visitors from all over gather to enjoy the flowers, parades, food, and pageants for the titles of "Festival Princess" and "Queen Azalea." In October is Riverfest, renowned as one of the state's best fall festivals. November holds several highly anticipated affairs like the Cucalorus Film Festival, as well as the Battleship Half Marathon, 10K, and 5K races. Many other events are held at prominent venues, such as the Live Oak Bank Pavilion at Riverbank Park and the Wilson Center at Cape Fear Community College.

Wilmington offers a variety of housing options, from single- and multi-family homes to townhouses and condominiums. According to Realtor.com, the year-over-year median listing

home price in December 2024 has experienced no significant change. As of January 2025, the median listing home price is \$450,000, with a three-bedroom, two-bathroom, single-family home of 1,200 square feet listing for \$385,000. Crime in Wilmington is comparable with national averages. The City and its Police Department are continually working on improving community outreach and progressively reducing crime rates.

People love living in Wilmington due to its influential southern charm. Rated as sixth of “The 15 Friendliest Cities In The South” (Southern Living, 2024) for southern cities with a population over 40,000, Wilmington is a welcoming place for resident and visitor alike. Schools are rated well, with the New Hanover County School District at the helm of the public school system.

For those seeking higher education, Wilmington is home to the University of North Carolina Wilmington (UNCW) campus and Cape Fear Community College. Other colleges and universities include East Carolina University (114 miles north in Greenville), North Carolina State University (130 miles northwest in Raleigh), and Duke University (155 miles northwest in Durham).

North Carolina has an abundance of professional sports teams including the Carolina Panthers (NFL), the Charlotte Hornets (NBA), the Carolina Hurricanes (NHL), the North Carolina Courage (NWSL), and 10 teams playing in the MiLB. Wilmington residents greatly enjoy supporting their local collegiate athletes.

Those who need to travel out of the City can easily do so. Frequent fliers use the Wilmington International Airport, the fourth largest airport in North Carolina. The airport continues to grow, offering 25 nonstop flights and almost 500 one-stop connections. Other nearby airports include Myrtle Beach International (77 miles south), and Raleigh-Durham International (147 miles north).

Wilmington possesses a strong sense of community and respect for its rich heritage. This community has nearly endless potential and big possibilities. If you are an outstanding professional looking for a great place to live, work, and raise a family, we invite you to apply today to be Wilmington’s next City Manager!

HISTORY

The location later known as Wilmington was originally inhabited by various indigenous peoples. During the 1500’s, however, European explorers discovered the area. By the early 1700’s, a permanent settlement was formed.

Wilmington’s official roots began with its colonial-era founding in 1739. Established along the banks of Cape Fear River, the City was crucial in the export of naval stores, lumber, and cotton. As the economy grew, so did the demand for slave labor—thus influencing Wilmington’s majority population demographics. Later, Wilmington played important roles in the American Revolutionary and Civil Wars. Though the City was fairly progressive during the Reconstruction era, in 1898, the nation’s only successful coup d’état took place, where armed white supremacists committed acts of murder and violently overthrew the city’s bi-racial elected government, forever changing the City. In remembrance, the 1898 Memorial Park was created, which is a culmination of a community-led effort to honor this tragic history. The City and community also host a number of remembrance events on the anniversary of the coup.

The City has also experienced a variety of economic changes. During the 19th and 20th centuries, Wilmington became a major rail hub. Later, upon the start of World War II, the City became home to the North Carolina Shipbuilding Company as part of the American government’s Emergency Shipbuilding Program. When railroad headquarters vacated Wilmington in 1960, the City made concerted efforts to recruit other industries into the community. Completion of Interstate 40 in 1990, as well as annexation of land around the City, improved these efforts. The area has since experienced explosive job and population growth, as well as increasing commuter traffic from New Hanover County and Leland residents. As such, Wilmington residents are frequently concerned about traffic and growth.

Over time, the City’s profile has also changed. While the historic districts and tree-lined brick streets on the southern side of downtown remain relatively unchanged, the former industrial northern waterfront has seen a complete transformation over the last 20 years. Many old industrial warehouses and outdated office buildings have been replaced or repurposed. Though growth has

been helpful to improve services available to the Wilmington community, the changes have sometimes concerned residents about potentially losing the area’s characteristic southern charm. However, Wilmington remains a regional hub for higher education, healthcare, shipping, recreation, the arts, and live entertainment. The City owns the Greenfield Lake Amphitheater (1,400-capacity) and the Live Oak Bank Pavilion (7,200-capacity) which host dozens of musical acts each season.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Recognized for its fairly mild weather, abundant recreational resources, and striking views, Wilmington has become an attractive place to call home. Indeed, the area has experienced intense population increases over the past few decades. As a special note, many retirees have also turned their eyes toward Wilmington, as evidenced by the City’s designation as one of the “10 Fastest-Growing Retirement Destinations in America” (Realtor, 2021).

See Table I for Wilmington’s demographic profile.

CLIMATE

Wilmington has a humid subtropical climate year-round and experiences all four seasons. Spring is lengthy, beginning in late February and lasting to early May. Humidity starts to build during these months, and average daytime temperatures range from high-50’s to high-70’s. Summer months experience high humidity and heat, especially June through August. Average high temperatures range between the 80’s and 90’s, with average low temperatures in the 50’s and low-70’s. As humidity and heat decrease significantly during fall, the average daytime temperature pleasantly sits between in the 60’s and low-80’s. Winter is typically mild and much dryer. January is the coldest month, with nighttime temperatures on average reaching 34.0° F.

Annual average rainfall is 58 inches, most of which occurs June through September. December is Wilmington’s snowiest month, receiving a majority of the area’s 0.9 inches of annual snowfall.

As with many coastal cities in the South, Wilmington is familiar with the challenges that come with tropical storms and

Table 1: Wilmington Demographics

Distribution by Race		Distribution by Age	
White	70.9%	0 to 15	12.1%
Black	16.5%	15 to 25	19.1%
Asian	1.6%	25 to 45	25.6%
Native American	0.4%	45 to 65	23.4%
Some Other / Two or More Races	10.6%	65 to 85	17.5%
Total	100.0%	Over 85	2.3%
Hispanic (all races)	8.3%	Population 122,695	

Educational Achievements (25 & Over) and Other Statistics	
High School or Higher	94.4%
Bachelor’s Degree or Higher	50.9%
Median Age—Wilmington	39.3
Median Age—U.S.	39.2
Median Household Income—Wilmington	\$71,362
Median Household Income—U.S.	\$80,610
Poverty Rate	12.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

hurricanes. The City has heavily invested in infrastructure and resiliency, such as investing \$88 million in capital drainage improvements since the inception of the City’s stormwater utility in 1998. Typically, Wilmington experiences damage due to wind and excessive flooding, as seen with in 2018 with Hurricane Florence and in 2024 with Tropical Storm Debby; however, Wilmington’s drainage systems have generally drained the rainfall well.

GEOGRAPHY

Wilmington is within New Hanover County and is the principal city of the Wilmington metropolitan area. Comprised of 52.97 square miles, the City contains 51.41 square miles of land and 1.56 square miles of water. Its average elevation is 43 feet above sea level. Located along North Carolina’s southeastern coast, Wilmington borders the Cape Fear River to the City’s west and

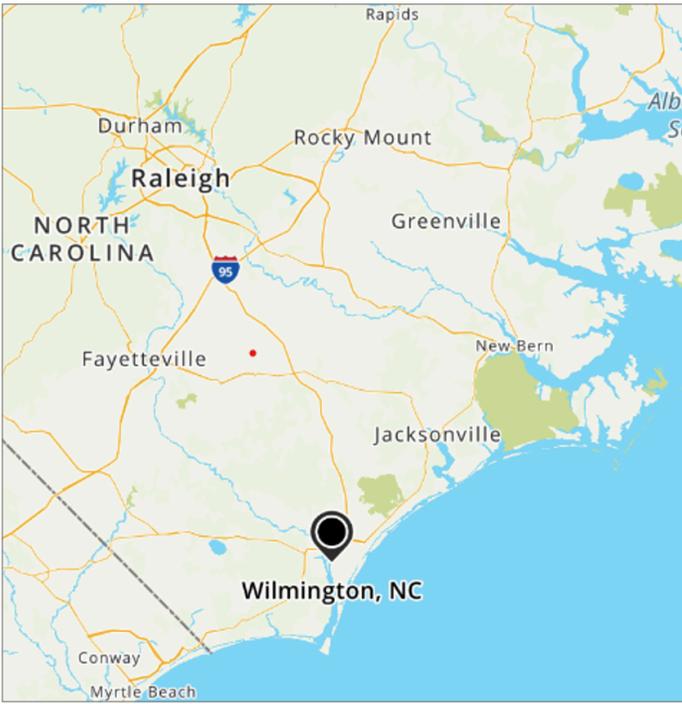


Figure 1: Location of Wilmington, NC

the Intracoastal Waterway to the City’s east, with the North Atlantic Ocean less than 10 miles away to the east.

Travelers have many options going to, from, and through Wilmington. U.S. Routes 17, 74, and 117 run through the City in a mostly east-west direction, with U.S. Route 421 running north-south. Major cities near Wilmington include Myrtle Beach, South Carolina (77 miles southwest); Jacksonville, North Carolina (58 miles northeast); Fayetteville, North Carolina (93 miles northwest); Greenville, North Carolina (118 miles north); and Raleigh, North Carolina (129 miles northwest). See Figure 1.

COMMERCE

Wilmington is home to various businesses and industry sectors. The City’s residents are involved in manufacturing and business services, life sciences, commercial and retail, and mixed-use. Local industries are involved in a range of operations, from simple assembly to manufacturing

processes producing synthetic fibers, fiber optics, nuclear fuel, and jet engine components.

The City also carries the monikers “Hollywood East” and “Wilmywood” due to the presence and industry of Cinespace (formerly EUE/Screen Gems Studios), the largest domestic television and movie production facility on the east coast. Parts of popular Cinespace shows like “Stranger Things” and “The Year I Turned Pretty” were filmed in Wilmington. Additionally, the City is noted for its tourism, the area’s largest economic component in terms of employment and revenues.

Additionally, the Port of Wilmington is one of two deep water harbors in the State of North Carolina. Ranked as one of the top ports in the county, the Port has annually moved 330,000 TEUs (20-foot equivalent units). Port activities contribute statewide to 88,200 jobs and \$660 million each year in state and local tax revenues.

See Table 2 for Wilmington’s principal employers.

THE GOVERNMENT

Wilmington runs under a Council-Manager form of government. City Council consists of seven members: the

Table 2: Principal Employers, Wilmington, NC

Employer	Industry	Employees
Novant Health	Healthcare	8,581
New Hanover County Schools	Education	3,702
University of North Carolina (Wilmington)	Education	2,236
New Hanover County	Government	1,982
General Electric Nuclear Fuel/Aircraft	Uranium Enrichment and Nuclear Fuel	1,888
Thermo Fischer Scientific (PPD)	Pharmaceuticals	1,800
City of Wilmington	Government	1,116
Cape Fear Community College	Education	1,083
Corning, Inc.	Optical Fiber	1,000
Wilmington Health	Healthcare	1,000

Source: Wilmington, NC 2023 CAFR

Mayor, Mayor Pro-tem, and five Councilmembers. All members are elected at-large to represent the entire City, as the City does not hold elections based on specific districts. Elections are held during odd-numbered years, with the Mayor elected to serve two-year terms and all other Councilmembers elected to serve staggered four-year terms. Members may serve an unlimited number of terms.

The present Mayor was first elected to City Council in 2003 and has served as Mayor since 2006. The rest of the Council have a variety of experience, with three Councilmembers currently serving their first term, two members serving their second, and another member serving his sixth term. Elections will be held in 2025, specifically for the Mayor's and three Councilmember's seats.

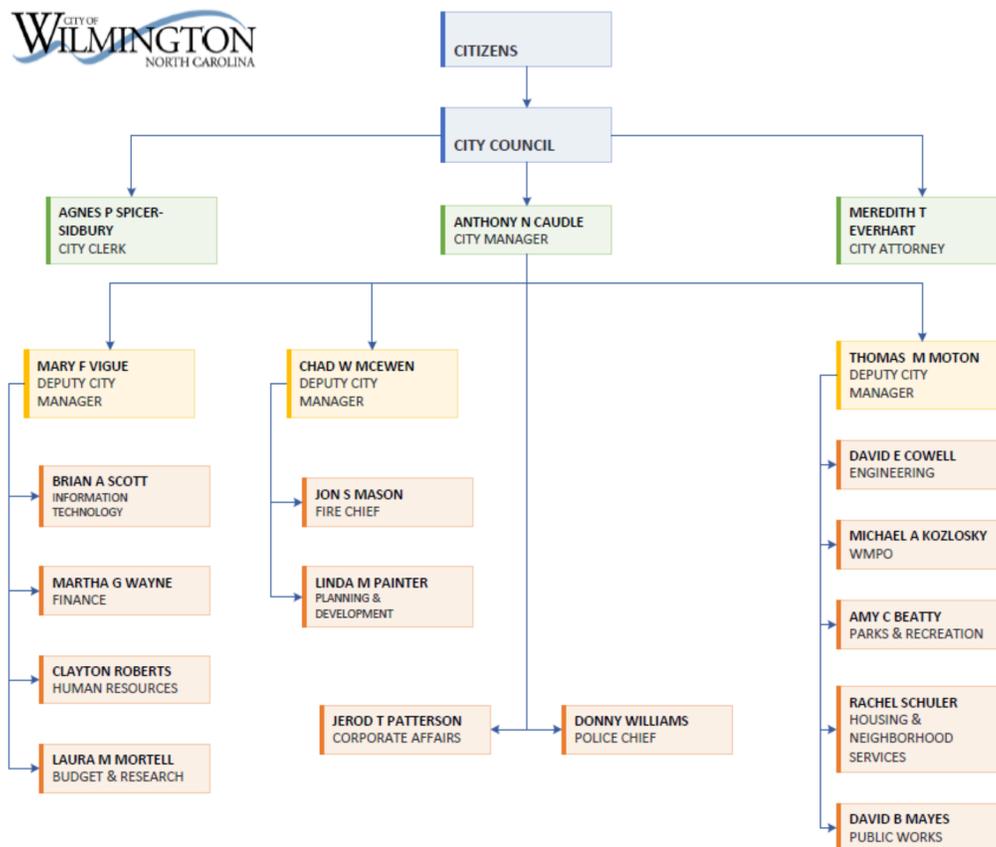
The Mayor and Councilmembers all have the best interests of the City at heart, get along well, respect one another, and hold the

staff in high regard. Their questions are thoughtful, and while they may disagree on an issue, they are never uncivil. In fact, it is not uncommon to observe an element of repartee among them during meetings.

The City Council appoints the City Manager, City Clerk, and City Attorney. The Council sets the policy and direction, and the Manager oversees the day-to-day operations of the organization. The Council also appoints the Fire and Police Chiefs, who report to the Manager. The Manager serves at the discretion of the Council and can be removed with a simple majority vote.

Wilmington City government consists of 16 departments and divisions, namely Budget and Research; City Attorney; City Clerk; City Manager; Corporate Affairs; Engineering; Finance; Fire Department; Housing and Neighborhood Services; Human Resources; Information Technology; Parks and Recreation; Planning and Development; Police Department;

FIGURE 2: WILMINGTON ORGANIZATIONAL CHART





and Public Works. The city is also the host organization for the region's transportation planning organization, the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, with a 13-member board representing local governments across a three-county area. All but the City Attorney and City Clerk report to the City Manager. (See Figure 2 for the organizational chart.) Of the City's 1,174 employees, the Manager supervises 1,158 individuals, most of which are in the Police Department (362 employees), Fire Department (237 employees), Public Works (177 employees), and Parks and Recreation (122 employees). All other employees are spread between the other departments and divisions. There are no unionized employees.

For Fiscal Year 2025, the City has a total budget of \$298.7 million and a general fund budget of \$149.8 million. Wilmington also provides a full range of services authorized by statute. Services include police, fire, streets, public improvements, planning and zoning, parks and recreation, general administrative services, recycling, and trash and stormwater management. The City also operates parking facilities and a golf course.

THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The greatest challenge facing Wilmington, is also its greatest opportunity – population growth. Similar to many cities across the country, exponential growth is a large factor affecting Wilmington. This presents three challenges.

The first challenge is keeping up with the City's infrastructure needs. It is a daily struggle to keep up with the need to construct and maintain roads, buildings, parks, water, sewer systems,

and bridges. Certain infrastructure projects were promised in the past but have not yet been completed. Strategies will need to be actualized to satisfy infrastructure demands and commitments. Working with City staff, as well as other governmental and private entities, to determine new solutions for the complex problems associated with significant growth, will be a challenging opportunity for the new City Manager.

The second challenge is Wilmington has a dynamic community that has strong opinions concerning the future of the City. The challenge will be to balance the residents' desire to maintain the City's historic beauty and small-town qualities, while moving forward in a strategic and thoughtful manner. The answer will be smart and quality development, instead of simply development. The goal will be to ensure resources are optimally utilized, that the right people are in the right places, and processes are as efficient as possible. This kind of request will require a delicate balance that only a practiced City Manager will be able to facilitate.

The third challenge to growth and inflation, is the cost of living in Wilmington, which is a reflection of the country as a whole. The City is almost 90% built-out, so development and redevelopment are a must. The City is making strides in providing more affordable housing, but more efforts and fresh ideas will need to be utilized to make housing more economical.

The next challenge and opportunity is the current Wilmington Police Chief, Donny Williams, is planning to retire the Summer of 2025. Chief Williams was born and raised in Wilmington, and has served as the City's first African American Police Chief. Programs and initiatives during his tenure have improved the force's relationship with the community and reduced violent crime. The City Council is concurrently conducting a search for the City's next Police Chief with a desire to build upon recent successes and ensure a smooth transition to new leadership for the department.

The City of Wilmington recognizes the injustices of its past and continues to pursue racial reconciliation as it charts a more inclusive future. The next City Manager will embrace the full diversity of Wilmington's community and marshal broad consensus for the City's efforts to create a unified vision for its future prosperity and quality of life.

Finally, the City of Wilmington acquired a 12.5-acre campus now known as the Skyline Center. The building is intended to consolidate numerous city departments under one roof and provide much needed parking near Riverfront Park. The purchase presented an outside-the-box solution to meet the City's operational space needs, and the City is also planning to sell its other office buildings and surplus properties. This acquisition serves as an example of the kind of development and redevelopment the City is looking for in its capital improvement projects.

There are shared issues that exist in the City that Wilmington cannot resolve by itself. These shared issues will require assistance from other communities, the county, the state and the federal government. These varied partnerships are essential to make meaningful progress and can't be emphasized enough. A successful manager must be able to adeptly navigate these relationships when it comes to appropriations and other external funding opportunities. Examples of such issues include homelessness, climate change and its effects on coastal communities, storm resilience, economic development, transportation, and major infrastructure needs.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The City Council is seeking an achievement-oriented leader and manager. They want someone to work with them as a partner and trusted advisor - someone who will be honest and tell them what they need to hear, not what they want to hear. They desire a Manager who will help them implement a shared vision - a plan to bring together all the elements needed to ensure the long-term health and well-being of the community. The Council seeks a candidate who embraces the diversity of the Wilmington community and are open to different perspectives. The best candidate will be professional and inspire confidence. They will work effectively with the City Council to provide feedback, guidance, vision, and recommendations on critical policy issues facing the community. While the Council works well together, the next City Manager will assist the Council in continuing their efforts to be a fully cohesive entity. This individual will introduce fresh, innovative ideas while taking the time to understand the history of Wilmington.

Having communications skills, organizational leadership and governance will be critical. Wilmington is a diverse community economically, culturally, and ethnically and it is important that the next manager be comfortable speaking with people from all walks of life. The Manager will need to be able to balance competing points of view, build stakeholder relationships, serve on board management, and convey the Council's vision in a clear and concise manner.

The ideal candidate will be approachable, receptive, open minded, ethical, and transparent. The Manager will also be organized, intelligent, forward thinking, friendly, dynamic, positive, and very proactive. The individual will have a "can do" attitude and be visionary yet practical. The best candidate will think strategically and be able to look over the horizon to anticipate problems and fix them before they become issues. The Manager will be astute with community leaders and partners. They will coordinate frequently with department heads to ensure a shared perspective among staff and community members.

In coordination with the City Council, the new City Manager will set the tone and vision for the City. The Manager will expect to be kept informed and will hold the staff accountable. The individual will encourage creativity. The ideal candidate will be a leader and encourage staff development and recognize that diverse opinions make programs better. Building teams and promoting teamwork will be important. Good judgment in hiring will be essential as will the realization that fun should be part of the workplace.

Customer service, along with integrity, will be core values for the Manager. Wilmington expects the Manager to be someone who leads by example and encourages the staff to find ways to get to "yes." Residents deserve to be treated fairly and an effort made to solve their problems. If a solution is not possible, a proper explanation of why should be given. Residents expect their City Manager to be driven, and to complete projects and promises.

The ideal candidate will be a critical thinker who is always asking if there is a better way to conduct business and address problems, and be successful in managing diverse board perspectives to achieve consensus around shared priorities. The Council wants

someone who will ensure its money is well spent. The next Manager will be an experienced professional with a proven track record of successful fiscal management, economic development strategies, and demonstrating project finalization (on time, on plan, and on budget).

As previously mentioned, accomplishments in intergovernmental relations will be important as the City frequently interacts with the local universities, the port authority, the county, other local governments, as well as state and federal agencies. Experience in a coastal community, college towns, public transportation, and public/private partnerships are all pluses. North Carolina experience is desirable but not mandatory. The position requires a minimum of a bachelor's degree in business administration, public administration, public policy or related field, and seven to ten years of increasingly responsible management experience in City government. A master's degree in public administration or a related field, and an ICMA Credentialed Manager designation are preferred.

The Council hopes the selected candidate will recognize Wilmington as an incredible opportunity and view the position as a destination, not a steppingstone on their career path.

COMPENSATION

The expected hiring range is \$250,000 to \$300,000. The final salary will depend on qualifications and experience. Benefits are excellent. The City Manager will be part of the North Carolina Local Government Employees' Retirement System (LGERS), like all City employees. The City also makes an automatic contribution to a 401K plan, with employees having an option to make their own additional contributions to a 401K or 457 plan.

THE MOST RECENT CITY MANAGER

The current City Manager is retiring after 17 years with Wilmington; serving 4 years as City Manager.

RESIDENCY

City residency expected during the term of employment.

HOW TO APPLY

E-mail your cover letter and resume to Recruit33@cb-asso.com by March 14th. Please apply ASAP as resumes will be screened as they arrive. Questions should be directed to Scott Krim at (801) 628-8364, and then Colin Baenziger at (561) 707-3537.

INTERNAL CANDIDATES

While internal candidates may apply for the position, the City Council is committed to a level playing field, and the best person will be selected for the position.

CONFIDENTIALITY

North Carolina law considers applications for employment to be part of a potential employee's personnel records, and personnel records are not public records that are subject to disclosure by the employer under state law.

THE PROCESS

Applications will be screened between February 8th and April 7th. Finalists will be selected on April 8th. Interviews will be held on April 24th and 25th. A selection will be made shortly thereafter.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

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

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For additional information about the City, visit:

www.wilmingtonnc.gov/Home

www.wilmingtonchamber.org/

www.wmpo.org/

www.wilmingtonandbeaches.com/

