

CITY MANAGER

BURIEN *Washington*



Why Apply?



This is an excellent opportunity to lead a young King County city with a strategic location and significant opportunities for continued growth. Located immediately south of Seattle and adjacent to Sea-Tac Airport, Burien offers a walkable downtown, a state-certified Creative District, miles of shoreline, and a diverse and welcoming community.

This is a city where you can make an impact. The City has a relatively new leadership team eager to grow under a City Manager who values mentorship and staff development. The City also benefits from a culture of collaboration, both internally and with community and regional partners. They seek a strong communicator who enjoys working with elected officials to set policy and direction, values staff development, and is energized by an active community invested in the city's future. The Interim City Manager is assisting the City through this recruitment process and will not be a candidate for the position.



Located immediately south of Seattle and adjacent to Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, Burien is a diverse and well-connected city situated along 6 miles of Puget Sound shoreline. Home to approximately 53,000 residents, Burien offers the accessibility of a major metropolitan area while maintaining the feel of an established neighborhood community.

Burien is a young city with deep local roots. It developed in the late 1800s as a summer retreat for city dwellers from Seattle and Tacoma and remained an unincorporated part of King County until residents voted to form the City in 1993. Today, Burien continues to define itself as a city of strong neighborhoods, beautiful mountain views, vibrant public spaces, and saltwater access. Seahurst Park, often described as the jewel of the city’s park system, offers saltwater beach access, trails, picnic areas, playgrounds, and views toward the Olympic Mountains.

Downtown Burien is one of the city’s defining strengths. Olde Burien preserves the feel of the historic town center, while Town Square has created a newer civic center with housing, public gathering space, a library, City Hall, and a central park that hosts community events. The weekly Burien Farmers Market brings people to Town Square throughout the year, and the local dining scene has become one of the most varied in the Puget Sound region, earning national attention from The New York Times in 2018. Burien is also home to one of Washington’s oldest Independence Day parades, a tradition dating to 1921.

Burien’s identity is shaped by its cultural diversity. More than half of residents are people of color, including nearly one quarter who identify as Hispanic or Latino. About 34 percent of residents age 5 and older speak a language other than English at home. Highline Public Schools, which serves Burien and neighboring communities, reflects that same international character, with more than 100 languages represented.





THE CITY OF BURIEN

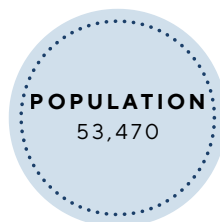
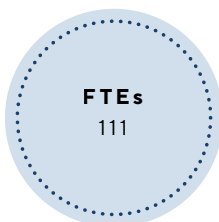
The City serves a population of 53,470 across 13.2 square miles in King County with a biennial budget of \$75.5 million and a team of 111 FTEs. City functions include Administrative Services, Community Development, Economic Development, Finance, Human Services, Legal, Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services, and Public Works. The City's workforce includes one bargaining unit.

Incorporated in 1993, the City of Burien operates under the Council-Manager form of government. The seven-member City Council is elected at large to four-year, staggered terms and selects a Mayor from among its members to serve a two-year term. The City Manager is appointed by the Council and is responsible for the daily administration of the City.

Police services are provided through a contract with the King County Sheriff's Office. Fire and emergency services are provided by King County Fire Protection District No. 2 and North Highline Fire District, while water, sewer, and electric utilities are provided by outside public and private entities.

The City's organizational values—accountability, integrity, collaboration, service, communication, and excellence—reinforce a culture of continuous improvement and shared responsibility. Burien also places a strong emphasis on partnerships, working with public, private, and regional organizations to leverage resources, support economic development, and advance community priorities.

Burien is well-positioned for continued investment. The Burien Transit Center, nearby light rail access, and proximity to I-5, I-405, and SR 518 make the city strategically located. The Puget Sound Regional Council designates Burien as a Regional Growth Center, helping focus future housing, employment, transportation, and federal transportation investments in a walkable, well-connected urban community.





THE CITY MANAGER

The City Manager serves as the Chief Executive Officer of the City government and is responsible for managing its overall operations to ensure the delivery of quality services consistent with the City Council’s policy direction. Duties are broad and encompass all aspects of municipal management. The City Manager is appointed by and serves at the will of the City Council. The City Manager directly supervises six department heads, the Economic Development Manager, and Human Services Manager.

IDEAL CANDIDATE TRAITS

- An authentic leader who leads with integrity, remains calm, is open to feedback, and maintains political neutrality.
- A transparent and candid communicator who builds trust with staff, the City Council, and the public.
- A collaborative partner who values Burien’s strong relationships with neighboring cities and civic organizations and will continue to build and enhance regional partnerships.
- A thoughtful listener who can channel input and suggestions into clear, understandable public policy options.
- A concise, poised, and fair-minded facilitator who can guide discussions with a Council with members of varying tenure and help move deliberations toward prudent action.
- A visible and inclusive leader who values Burien's diversity, meets residents where they live, and engages the entire community including the underrepresented members of the community so all voices can help inform public policy deliberations.



OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEADERSHIP

1) **Community Engagement & Visibility** - Traditionally a working-class community, Burien has grown to include a wide spectrum of constituents. Residents are highly engaged in civic life and invested in the city's future, although some groups have historically been less represented in public participation. Ensuring and strengthening engagement with these communities so that a broad range of voices can help inform City decision-making will be important.

2) **Financial Stability & Infrastructure** - Like many cities in Washington, Burien has struggled to ensure that adequate resources are available to address challenges. Burien continues to address infrastructure challenges rooted in its history as part of unincorporated King County. Working to bring financial stability to the City and exploring additional financial opportunities, including a possible levy lid lift, will be a key priority. The City is also considering modifications to its development and impact fees. Combined with ongoing economic development, these changes will require the next City Manager to balance growth with financial stewardship.

3) **Complex Community & Regional Issues** - The next City Manager will need to help address difficult issues including:

- **Homelessness** - Like other urban centers, Burien has visible and complex homelessness issues. It will be essential for the next City Manager to understand these realities and how they could be addressed by engaging with the City's social service providers and working with the Council to develop and enhance potential solutions to the issues experienced by the unhoused.
- **Immigration** - Burien is a welcoming community and has published resources and passed laws in support of community members, including prohibiting City employees and officers from inquiring into immigration status. Navigating through and understanding current challenges and concerns for immigrant and refugee community members will be important for the next City Manager.
- **Airport Expansion Impacts** - Sea-Tac Airport has ambitious expansion plans, while Burien and surrounding communities have serious concerns that adequate mitigation for potential impacts has not been addressed by the Port of Seattle. The next City Manager will need to take an active role in engaging with partners, staff, and the agencies involved to fully address these issues.

4) **A New Vision & Strategic Direction** - Burien continues to experience growth, and the next City Manager will need to guide the Council in its discussions and formulation of the next Strategic Plan and associated work plans for the City's various departments. For a leader who is decisive, adaptable, inclusionary, and accountable, there is an opportunity to help create a new vision for the city through thoughtful engagement with staff, Council, and the public.



EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE

Bachelor's degree in public administration or a related field; and 9 years of progressively responsible management experience in municipal government, including responsibility for planning, organizing, and executing a diverse work program, with at least 5 years in a supervisory capacity. An equivalent combination of education, experience, and training that provides the knowledge and skills necessary to perform the job may be considered.

PREFERRED:

- Master's degree in public administration or related field
- ICMA certification

COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

The City of Burien offers an annual salary range of \$230,000-\$240,000 based on qualifications and experience, along with a vehicle allowance and comprehensive [benefits](#) package. City residency is required following appointment, unless waived by the City Council.

RESOURCES

[2025-2026 Biennial Budget](#)

[Strategic Plan](#)

[2044 Comprehensive Plan](#)

[Burien Magazine](#)

[Choose Burien](#)

[Discover Burien](#)



**TO
APPLY**

Apply Online: gmphr.com

First Review: October 11, 2026

More Info: Greg Young, GMP Consultants
gyoung@gmphr.com / (360) 410-8626

