



City of Mercer Island

W A S H I N G T O N

invites your interest in the position of

Police Chief



Recruitment Services Provided by
Ralph Andersen & Associates



The Community

At just over five miles long and two miles wide, Mercer Island, Washington, is a true island community consisting of high-quality residential areas, preserved parks and open space, and miles of developed shoreline. Incorporated in July 1960, “The Island” has its own sense of identity, distinct from its neighbors, yet is just 10 minutes from downtown Seattle via the Interstate 90 floating bridge and a similar distance from the commercial centers and residential communities of the Eastside.

Mercer Island is recognized as one of the premier residential communities in the State of Washington. The City has 475 acres of City-owned park and open space, which helps maintain the Island’s natural beauty. The result is a community of quiet, forested neighborhoods and parks, complemented by views of Seattle, the Cascade Mountains, Mount Rainier, and Lake Washington. It’s also an active community where many volunteers, boards, and commissions work closely with the City Council and City staff. Residents are passionate, informed, and engaged.

Mercer Island School District is renowned for maintaining a high standard of student achievement in and out of the classroom. For the 2023-2024 school year, there are 3,975 students enrolled from kindergarten through 12th grade. There are also several private schools and preschools on the Island.

Organizational Mission and Values

The City of Mercer Island's mission is to provide outstanding municipal services that enhance and protect the environment, the quality of life, and the community's health, safety, and welfare. The City's vision is to provide valued and effective municipal services in efficient, flexible, innovative, and creative ways, emphasizing sustainability. The City of Mercer Island values:

- ◆ **High ethical standards:** We conduct ourselves with honesty and integrity.
- ◆ **Outstanding customer service:** We treat everyone respectfully and strive to anticipate and respond to the community's needs.
- ◆ **Teamwork:** We collaborate and support each other. We look for innovative ways to create new and better services.
- ◆ **Leadership development:** We encourage each other to become the best we can be. We demonstrate leadership by being flexible, open, and empathetic.





Governance and Organization

The City of Mercer Island is a Council-Manager form of government with seven City Councilmembers elected at large. There are a variety of advisory boards and commissions, including the Arts Council, Planning Commission, Design Commission, Utility Board, Open Space Conservancy Trust Board, and Parks & Recreation Commission.

Mercer Island is a nearly full-service city providing a broad range of municipal services, including Law Enforcement and Public Safety, Community Planning and Development, Parks Maintenance, Water, Sewer, and Stormwater utilities, Human Services, and Administrative and Financial services. Mercer Island has an adopted 2023-2024 biennial budget of \$201.5 million. The City contracts with Eastside Fire and Rescue for fire and emergency medical services.

The Police Chief is hired by and reports to the City Manager. City Manager Jessi Bon was appointed in February 2020. The City employs approximately 180 full-time and 15 part-time employees (110 of the 195 employees are unrepresented, while the remaining employees are represented by one of three union groups: Police, Police Support, and AFSCME).



About the Department

The Mercer Island Police Department provides a full range of police services. Its mission is to contribute to Mercer Island's reputation as a safe and friendly community to live, work, learn, play, and visit.

Department personnel are professional, compassionate, highly trained, technologically savvy, and strive to exceed the community's expectations. The Department is composed of 33 commissioned personnel and 5 civilian employees.

Mercer Island Police respond to an average of 13,000 calls each year, mostly involving larceny and fraud. The 2024 department budget is \$8.9 million. A wide range of public safety services are provided to the people who live and work on Mercer Island, including:

Police Patrol: The patrol unit is staffed by four patrol sergeants, four corporals, and sixteen police officers. The average response time for police emergency calls for police is less than six minutes. The Island's crime index, a measure of the crime rate per thousand people, is one of the lowest in the state. During 2023, Mercer Island police officers issued 1,425 citations, made 193 arrests, and investigated 152 traffic accidents.



About the Department *continued*

Marine Patrol: Mercer Island Police lead patrol efforts on Lake Washington in partnership with neighboring agencies. The mission of the Marine Patrol is to promote boating safety and the protection of life and property in the waters surrounding Mercer Island and the five contract cities of Bellevue, Renton, Medina, Hunts Point, and Yarrow Point. Marine Patrol provides regular boat patrols of Lake Washington and surrounding shorelines, enforcing state and local laws, answering calls for assistance, rendering emergency medical aid, suppressing boat and waterfront fires, investigating water-related accidents, and educating the public in safe boating. Over the past three years, on average, officers spent 850 hours patrolling or responding to emergencies, conducted 250 vessel safety inspections, and answered 405 calls for service each year.

Criminal Investigations: The detective unit is staffed by one supervisor and two general detectives. The team investigates all misdemeanor and felony crimes and works closely with the local prosecutor and the King County prosecutor's office.

School Resource Officer: The Department created a School Resource Officer (SRO) position in 1996. The SRO is a uniformed police officer who works in the schools on Mercer Island, primarily serving Mercer Island High School, Crest Learning Center, and Islander Middle School.

Bicycle Patrol: Bicycle patrol began in 1993 and consists of one supervisor and eight officers. The bicycle patrol assignments are part-time with primary areas of coverage including the Town Center, city parks, bicycle/pedestrian paths, and school grounds.

Special Operations Team: The Department maintains a tactical team trained and equipped to respond to situations beyond the scope of regular patrol duties, such as a barricaded gunman, dignitary protection, and high-risk warrant service. The team is comprised of eight officers who volunteer for the extra duty, which is in addition to regular assignments.

Dive Team: The Dive Team was created in 1976 to provide water rescue, recovery, and investigative services on Lake Washington. The team is comprised of seven officers who are trained and certified as rescue divers.

Emergency Management: As part of the Police Department, the City's robust Emergency Management program prepares for, responds to, and recovers from local and regional incidents. The City offers basic disaster preparedness and response skills training to Mercer Island residents and businesses through the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training. Mercer Island boasts a large and active volunteer group that supports the City's emergency management programs.

About the Position

Under the direction of the City Manager, the Mercer Island Police Chief is responsible for the overall management of the Police Department in all areas of law enforcement and public safety. The Police Chief is responsible for achieving goals and objectives for the Department set jointly with Department staff and the City Manager, consistent with the organization's values and mission statement. This position directly supervises the Police Operations Commander and Police Services Commander. The position is responsible for the development and execution of annual operating and capital budgets.

The Police Chief will possess knowledge of laws, legal codes, court procedures, case law, government regulations, executive orders, and agency rules. The Chief will be experienced with the use of relevant equipment, policies, procedures, and strategies to promote effective local, state, and national security operations for the protection of people, data, property, and institutions. The Chief will work well with diverse groups of people, inside and outside the organization. The Chief should demonstrate sufficient technical skills given the level of the position and a willingness to learn and implement new technology advancements in the industry.

The Chief must balance social, workforce, and financial responsibilities, evaluating the impact of decision-making to support a safe and welcoming community for all. The Chief represents the department to public officials, public and private organizations, individual residents, local businesses, and the media. The Chief serves as a member of the Director's Group and is thereby looked upon to participate in the overall leadership of the city administration.



Chief Holmes is retiring after a 30-year career with the MIPD, serving as the Chief for the last 18 years.



Ideal Candidate

Mercer Island seeks a visionary, values-based leader to serve as its next Police Chief. The ideal candidate is someone who aligns with the City's mission and values and demonstrates a calm demeanor, diplomacy, and collaboration. The ideal candidate is solidly experienced in all law enforcement and public safety areas and has a proven history of fostering community and department trust.

The next Police Chief should be committed to establishing open, honest, and transparent internal and external communication. This Police Chief is committed to advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in the community and the Department. The most competitive candidates for the Police Chief position will have experience in collaborative executive teamwork and building lasting partnerships in the community.

The ideal candidate has experience dealing with mental health and substance use challenges, recognizing these are societal issues in which law enforcement is a partner in supporting people. This will be someone who has implemented practices to address these issues in their community.

Further, the ideal candidate understands and supports officer wellness programs and recognizes the importance of addressing the issues affecting the recruitment and retention of officers.

The ideal candidate will:

- ◆ Provide service with excellence, humility, and integrity in daily work; build trust by listening; treat people with respect; acknowledge opportunities for improvement; and follow through with commitments.
- ◆ Actively create strong, supportive internal and external relationships to attain a common goal and achieve greater impact together.
- ◆ Bring technical expertise to pursue new ideas and creative outcomes grounded in Mercer Island's unique culture, opportunities, and challenges.
- ◆ Respond appropriately in various situations, be able to meet the needs of a given moment and make sound decisions when the circumstances and potential outcomes remain unclear.
- ◆ Be knowledgeable of business and management principles involved in strategic planning, resource allocation, leadership techniques, and coordination of people.
- ◆ Understand financial processes and procedures such as city budgeting and accounting.
- ◆ Be able to identify complex problems and review related information to develop and evaluate options and implement solutions.
- ◆ Be able to exercise sound judgment in facilitating highly confidential matters.



Education and Experience

A bachelor's degree in law enforcement, criminal justice, public administration, or a related field, and five (5) years of law enforcement supervisory experience, with at least two (2) years of experience at the rank of Sergeant or higher is required. A master's degree in criminal justice, public administration, or a comparable degree is preferred. Graduation from the FBI National Academy or equivalent police command school is also preferred.

The Police Chief position requires certification, or ability to obtain certification, as a police officer as required by the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission: <https://cjtc.wa.gov/>. A Washington driver's license is required within 30 days of employment. This position is not covered under the Mercer Island Police Civil Service system.

This position requires candidates to satisfactorily pass a comprehensive background investigation, including but not limited to a criminal background check, physical examination, polygraph test, drug test, and psychological examination upon hire. Must be willing to work evening and weekend hours in addition to normal hours.

Compensation and Benefits

This is an at-will position and reports directly to the City Manager. The Chief will join the City as a key contributor to the City's Management team. The salary range is \$185,000 to \$220,000, dependent on qualifications and experience. The City of Mercer Island offers a comprehensive benefits program including:

- ◆ **Paid Leave:** 11 holidays, 1 floating holiday, 24 vacation days, 12 sick leave days, and 5 days executive leave per year.
- ◆ **Retirement:** Required participation in the State of Washington Department of Retirement Systems – Law Enforcement Officers and Firefighters Retirement System (LEOFF).
- ◆ **Healthcare Insurance:** Medical insurance (Regence Medical Blue Shield, Kaiser Permanente or LEOFF Trust), dental insurance (Delta Dental or Washington Dental Service), vision insurance (Vision Services Plan), and annual VEBA contribution of either \$1,200 or \$3,600 (depending on insurance plan choice).
- ◆ **Other Insurance Coverage:** 125% of annual salary in a life insurance benefit, Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance, and Long-Term Disability Insurance.
- ◆ **Position Specific Benefits:** MissionSquare health retirement account and take-home vehicle.
- ◆ **Elective Benefits:** Supplemental Insurance options, Supplemental Life Insurance options, Long-Term Care Insurance, Short-Term Disability Insurance, Supplemental Medical Insurance, Medical and Dependent Care Flexible Spending Accounts, and MissionSquare Deferred Compensation (457) Plan.
- ◆ **Workplace Benefits:** Employee Assistance Program (counseling sessions for employee and family members), Flexible work schedule opportunities (limitations apply), and Employee Association (promoting social events).

This is a statewide search with a focus on individuals that may already reside in the Puget Sound area. If needed and in order to attract a wide range of highly qualified candidates, the City may offer a moving and relocation to the Puget Sound region.

Application Process

This is a confidential recruitment process, and all aspects of this search will be handled accordingly throughout the various stages, including final selection. To ensure the utmost confidentiality, there will be no public release of applicants or finalist information during any phase of the recruitment process. Additionally, at a later part in the process, top candidates will be required to submit an extensive list of references, although no references will be contacted until mutual interest has been established.

Candidates are encouraged to **apply immediately; resumes are currently under review**. Ralph Andersen & Associates will conduct preliminary interviews as applications are received. Electronic submittals are strongly preferred to: Ralph Andersen & Associates via email to apply@ralphandersen.com. Candidates must include a compelling cover letter and comprehensive resume. Only the most highly qualified candidates will be invited for an on-site interview anticipated in early May. Final selection by the City Manager may also include other introductions and/or receiving additional input before a final selection is made. Candidates selected as finalists for this position will be subject to a comprehensive background check. The City will directly handle the required P.O.S.T. background on the selected candidate.

Confidential inquiries are welcomed to Ms. Heather Renschler, Project Director, at (916) 630-4900. Candidates may also pre-schedule an introductory discussion by emailing scheduling@ralphandersen.com.



The City of Mercer Island is an Equal Opportunity Employer and values diversity in its workforce.

www.mercerisland.gov