
A Student's Guide to Fountain Valley's City Government



Updated February 1, 2012

Fountain Valley's History

Tongva people were the first ones to call Fountain Valley home. They lived here up until the time when the Spanish settlers arrived. One of the settlers was a man named Manuel Nieto. Nieto had been granted 300,000-acres which he named Rancho Los Nietos, and which is largely the area known today as Fountain Valley. Upon independence from Spain, the area was transferred to Mexico and later was given to the United States as part of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

At one point in time, Fountain Valley was known as Gospel Swamps due to the many swamps that dotted the landscape, and the large number of preachers in the area. The landscape changed though in the late 1870s when a severe drought hit.

The drought had a significant effect on the future of the area as farmers discovered the rich soil that was once overshadowed by the wetlands. Another bonus for farmers was that there was a plentiful supply of fresh water for irrigation coming from natural springs and artesian wells. It was these natural springs and artesian wells that led residents of the time to call the area "Fountain Valley."

With the newly discovered farmland came higher land values, which attracted more people to the area. In 1903, a pioneer by the name of James T. Talbert formed a drainage district and channeled the Santa Ana River. He also built drainage canals that permanently protected the farmland from flooding.

The first farmers grazed cattle and grew field crops such as sugar beets, beans, barley, and wheat. Later, farmers planted truck crops such as strawberries, cabbage, cauliflower, asparagus, corn, beans, lettuce, carrots, spinach, onions, tomatoes, broccoli, parsley, peas, and squash.

The City of Fountain Valley was incorporated in 1957 as the 21st Orange County city. Since becoming a City, Fountain Valley has been recognized, both locally and nationally, as a forward-looking community dedicated to giving its citizens the best quality of life possible.

Fountain Valley grew very quickly in the 1960s. Thankfully, the growth took place after a Master Plan for the community had been put in place. This provided a “blueprint” for the growth to take place in an orderly planned way. This is why Fountain Valley has often been referred to as Orange County’s best-planned community. The Master Plan, also called the General Plan, has been updated many times over the last 50 years to keep the growth orderly. Today the City is considered to be “built out” and has a population of 55, 313.

Even though it is mature, Fountain Valley will need to continue to look for ways it can change to meet its environment and the needs of its citizens. The strong foundation that the City has been built on over the last 50 years will enable it to adapt well to the future.

Fountain Valley Quick Facts

Population: 55, 313

Incorporation Date: June 13, 1957

City Flower: Indian Hawthorne

City Tree: Evergreen Pear

City Colors: Blue and White

Government Type: General Law City with a Council-Manager form of government.

City Services: Full-service City with two fire stations and 41 firefighters and a police station with 65 peace officers.

Number of City Employees: 215 full-time & 46 part-time

Geographic Area: 9.87 square miles

Geographic Location: 30 miles southeast of Los Angeles and 90 miles northeast of San Diego.

Longitude and Latitude: 117 degree 57 minutes 30 seconds Longitude, and 33 degrees 42 minutes 30 seconds Latitude.

Elevation: 10 to 45 feet above-sea-level.

Number of Schools: 12 elementary schools, 3 middle schools, 5 high schools, and 2 colleges.

Number of Parks: 20

Number of Hospitals: 2

City Council Members:

Mayor John J. Collins
Mayor Pro Tem Mark McCurdy
Council Member Larry R. Crandall
Council Member Steve A. Nagel
Council Member Michael Vo

City Manager: Raymond H. Kromer

City Hall Hours: Monday - Thursday 7am—5pm
Alternating Fridays 8am—5pm

City Council Meetings: 1st & 3rd Tuesdays of the month

Representatives:

Barbara Boxer, United States Senate
Diane Feinstein, United States Senate
Dana Rohrabacher, US Congress, 46th District
Tom Harman, State Senate, 35th District
Alan Mansoor, State Assembly, 68th District

City Government and Services

The City of Fountain Valley is a general-law city with a Council-Manager form of government. The City Council is comprised of five members elected for four-year terms of office. The Mayor and Mayor Pro Tempore are rotated by the Council from among its members to serve for one-year terms.

City Council meetings are held on the first and third Tuesdays of the month at 6 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 10200 Slater Avenue, Fountain Valley.

The following information describes the City's services in general. For a more in-depth look at the services of the City departments, please visit our website at www.fountainvalley.org.

ADMINISTRATION

The City is made up of a legislative, legal, and administrative branches of the City. The City Council is the legislative branch. The Council is responsible for approving public policies, laws, programs, and where/how the City spends its money. In addition, the City Council members serve as the Board for the Fountain Valley Agency for Community Development. This Board sets policies on housing and development to best serve the community's interests.

The City Attorney is the legal branch of the City government. This person is appointed by the City Council and is responsible for advising the City Council and City staff on legal matters. The City Manager is the head of the administrative branch. This person is also appointed by the City Council and is responsible for

daily operations for the City, which includes making sure the City Council's policies are carried out. The City Manager is also appointed as the Executive Director of the Fountain Valley Agency for Community Development. As Executive Director, he administers the housing and economic development policies set forth by the Agency's Board.

The City Council and City Manager are supported by Administrative Services. Administrative Services is responsible for working with federal, state and county government agencies, providing information to the public about City programs and events and overseeing the risk management program which attempts to minimize accidents and injuries to citizens and employees.

CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

The City Clerk's office has a wide range of responsibilities. In their daily duties, the office may record and maintain actions of the City Council and Fountain Valley Agency for Community Development, administer elections, maintain the Municipal Code, provide for public records requests, process claims against the City, certify or notarize official legal documents, or administer Oaths of Affirmation and Office.

The City Clerk is the local official in charge of elections. This person processes candidates, provides voter registration information, and informs the public on election updates. The Clerk is also responsible for maintaining and safeguarding important historic and permanent records of the City. In Fountain Valley, the records are managed with an electronic system, which stores them digitally. Records that are stored include meeting minutes,

Ordinances, Resolutions, and City Council Agenda's. Citizens that want official records must ask for them from City Clerk. Also, citizens that want to file a claim or submit other documents must do so through the City Clerk.

FINANCE

The Finance Department takes care of all the money for the City. Part of the department's duties include monitoring and reporting on the City's bank accounts and preparing the annual City budget. The department also helps all the other departments by issuing employee paychecks, buying equipment and supplies as needed, and collecting money for fees. This department also issues business licenses to business operating in the City and mails out water and trash bills.

FIRE & BUILDING SAFETY

The City's Fire and Building Safety Department consists of Fire Suppression, Paramedics, Fire Administration, Fire Prevention, and Building Safety sections.

The Fire Prevention Bureau's goal is to make sure that local, state, and federal rules and regulations about fire safety are followed. This department prevents fires and ensures life safety by inspecting buildings, enforcing rules and regulations, and educating the business community and its citizens. The Fire Prevention Bureau also does plan reviews of new buildings, hazardous materials management, disaster preparedness, and public education.

The City's two fire stations, which are staffed 24 hours a day, are located at 17737 Bushard St. and 16767 Newhope St. The Fire Department's fleet includes a Tiller Truck with 100' aerial ladder,

two Paramedic Engines, and a Command Vehicle. Fire crews respond to fires, medical emergencies, traffic collisions, and hazardous chemical spills.

The Building Safety Division has a Building Official, Building Inspectors, and Permit Technicians. Building Safety is responsible for making sure that State and Local codes and regulations are followed on all new or remodeled buildings in the City.

PERSONNEL

The Personnel Division is responsible for many services provided to City departments and employees. The Personnel Division manages the City's hiring processes through an on-line application system that lets people apply through the City's website for City jobs. Once hired, this division manages employees benefits such as health insurance and retirement. In addition, the Personnel Division is responsible for employee safety, training, and illness prevention programs.

PLANNING

The Planning Department has a Current Planning Division, Advanced Planning Division, Code Enforcement Division, and a Housing and Community Development Division. All of these Divisions work together to help make sure the City remains a safe, healthy, and attractive City in which to live in.

Advanced Planning works on planning the City's future through the General Plan, Specific Plans, and making sure the environment is protected. Current Planning writes reports and gives presentations to the City Council and Planning Commission regarding new projects and they meet zoning and other important laws.

The Housing and Community Division helps people buy their first home or rehabilitate the home they live in. They also assist in improving neighborhoods and shopping centers when needed. The Code Enforcement employees make sure homes and businesses follow the laws and rules of the City. They also take complaints from citizens about things like messy yards, broken parts on houses or cars parked on the grass.

POLICE

The Police Department protects the citizens of Fountain Valley from crime. The Department has 65 police officers. The duties of a Police Officer may include writing traffic tickets, investigating crimes, answering 911 emergency phone calls, or educating citizens on how to stay safe from criminals. There are also about 40 senior citizen's that volunteer to help the Police Department watch for people breaking the law.

The Police Department also has many other jobs. One job is to try and keep graffiti away by having it removed immediately and catching those that paint it. Another is to help neighborhoods set up Neighborhood Watch programs so that neighbors are looking out for each other's property. The Police Department has an award called the Crime Biter Award that is given to citizens who report crime.

PUBLIC WORKS

The Public Works Department is in charge of keeping City Hall, streets, sidewalks, and parks attractive and safe for citizens. This department ensures the streets and gutters are swept, the 650 drains are cleaned, the 421,000 feet of sewer line is working correctly, and the water is flowing to homes and businesses.

The Public Works Department is divided into Engineering and Field Services. The Engineering Division oversees the design, mapping, construction, and inspection of all Public Works projects, such as fixing streets and sewer pipes. They also make sure the traffic lights work correctly. Field Services is responsible for the maintaining the City's parks, City buildings, streets, sewers, storm drains, fresh water, and City cars.

RECREATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

The Recreation and Community Services Division provides many programs, activities, and events to for the citizens of Fountain Valley. The Division manages the Fountain Valley Recreation Center at 16400 Brookhurst Street and The Center at Founders Village Senior and Community Center at 17967 Bushard Street.

The Recreation and Community Services sponsors youth and adult sports leagues, classes, summer camps, concerts in the park, movies in the park, and the Easter Egg Hunt to name a few activities. They also provide a quarterly magazine for the community called the "Fountain Pen," to keep citizens informed about activities.

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