



Director of Parks, Recreation, and Public Property City of Omaha

Contact Name: - -

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Closing Date:

Salary: \$180,000 - \$200,000

Description:

The City of Omaha seeks a visionary, experienced Director of Parks, Recreation & Public Property to transform Omaha parks into a Top 10 Parks City through innovation, partnership, and dedicated leadership.

POSITION OVERVIEW AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The City of Omaha seeks an innovative, strategic, community-focused leader to serve as its next Director of Parks, Recreation and Public Property. This executive-level position reports directly to the Mayor and plays a central role in managing and shaping the city's extensive parks, recreation, and public property systems.

The Director must be a seasoned park and recreation professional committed to excellence in public service, park management and operational leadership, inclusive programming, and long-term urban livability. The Director's mandate is to bridge the gap between ambitious planning and operational excellence to enhance Omaha's impressive park system. This position requires a visionary, positive, problem-solving leadership style, strong personnel and systems management skill, and an open, innovative approach to public/private partnerships and collaboration.

The Director will oversee the planning, development, and maintenance of public parks, facilities, recreational programs, natural areas, public properties, and capital projects throughout Omaha. In collaboration with city leadership and the philanthropic community, this person will play a critical role in implementing the city's park vision and key strategies.

Strategic Leadership and Implementation

- Lead the realization of Omaha's bold goal of becoming a Top 10 Parks City in the United States, bridging the gap between ambitious planning and operational excellence
- Ensure park initiatives are seamlessly integrated into the city's broader growth and sustainability plans
- Lead staff in the development and execution of comprehensive master and site-specific plans, providing high-level input and direction on program goals and objectives
- Create a clear framework for planning objectives that meet NRPA standards, positioning Omaha as a model for parks and recreation systems nationally

Operational Excellence

- Provide high-level administrative oversight of the day-to-day operations, maintenance, and activities of the Parks and Recreation Department and various public properties

- Oversee a multi-disciplinary team spanning landscape architecture, urban forestry, golf and aquatics, recreation programming, and public property management, ensuring each division operates at the highest level of performance
- Manage a \$66M operating budget with financial discipline, accountability, and an eye toward identifying new revenue streams and sponsorship opportunities
- Inspire and direct staff to set innovative goals and achieve measurable results in programming, maintenance, and community engagement, building a culture of excellence, continuous improvement, and partnership

Capital Projects

- Lead the end-to-end delivery of major capital projects, delegating tasks across teams, and ensuring work is completed on time and on budget
- Oversee the planning and development of a new state-of-the-art sports complex, from site planning and stakeholder alignment through construction and completion
- Develop and implement a prioritized capital improvement program that addresses deferred maintenance, facility upgrades, and new developments

Partnership Coordination and Community Engagement

- Cultivate high-level public/private partnerships, aligning the strategic efforts of the Omaha Parks Foundation and City Parks Advisory Board with the city's long-term goals
- Build and maintain strong relationships with key partner organizations, including the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District, MECA, local sports organizations, philanthropic foundations, and community groups, leveraging these relationships to expand resources and deliver citywide impact
- Establish and maintain collaborative working relationships with a variety of individuals within the community, city departments, and city leaders, serving as a visible and accessible ambassador for Omaha's parks system
- Represent the city at public meetings, City Council sessions, and community forums, and serve on boards and commissions
- Demonstrate tact, diplomacy, positivity, energy, and patience in all interactions, with an unwavering commitment to improving the quality of life in the Omaha community

DESIRED EXPERIENCES AND COMPETENCIES

The City of Omaha seeks an experienced parks and recreation executive with a proven track record of leading large-scale systems and capital projects, building and maintaining partnerships, and leading staff in a complex urban environment. The ideal candidate is a strategic builder who can translate bold vision into operational reality, bringing big-picture thinking and hands-on execution skills to move Omaha toward its parks vision.

Strategic Leadership and Implementation

- Extensive administrative and management experience in parks and recreation operations, landscape architecture, or an equivalent combination of education and experience, with a city population comparable to Omaha or larger
- Demonstrated ability to translate bold organizational vision into concrete operational strategies, timelines, and measurable outcomes
- Experience reporting to and working closely with elected officials, senior city leadership, and appointed boards and commissions
- Experience developing and implementing strategic plans, master plans, and departmental frameworks that align with broader city goals and community priorities

Operational Excellence

- Demonstrated ability to oversee large, complex departments with diverse operational functions, ensuring service delivery is efficient, consistent, and aligned with strategic priorities
- Track record of identifying and implementing operational improvements, modernizing systems and processes, and building organizational capacity across a large, multi-disciplinary workforce
- Strong financial acumen with experience developing, managing, and monitoring multi-million-dollar operating budgets in a public sector environment
- Demonstrated capacity to lead, motivate, and develop staff while cultivating a growth mindset, facilitating organizational evolution, and establishing a culture of excellence, partnership, and continuous improvement
- Familiarity with National Recreation and Park Association standards, accreditation processes, and award programs, and a demonstrated commitment to pursuing recognized excellence

Capital Project Expertise

- Proven experience overseeing major large-scale capital projects from planning through construction and completion, with demonstrated ability to manage complex, multi stakeholder projects on time and on budget
- Experience navigating the full project lifecycle from community engagement and site planning through design, procurement, construction management, and project closeout
- Deep knowledge of park development and maintenance, recreation facility planning, landscape architecture, urban forestry, golf and aquatics, and public property management
- Familiarity with capital improvement programming, bond financing, grant funding, and public/private investment strategies that support large-scale park development

Partnership Coordination and Community Engagement

- Track record of cultivating successful public/ private partnerships and working effectively with foundations, individual donors, boards, philanthropic organizations, and civic and community groups
- Strong communication and relationship-building skills across government, business, nonprofit, and community sectors, with demonstrated ability to align diverse stakeholders around a shared vision
- Experience navigating complex environments with professionalism, discretion, and sound judgment, maintaining productive relationships with elected officials, community advocates, and the public

Education and Credentials

- Bachelor's degree in public administration, business administration, parks and recreation management, landscape architecture, political science, or related field of study
- Master's degree preferred
- CPRP or CPRE certifications preferred

COMPENSATION

This is a full-time, exempt, benefit-eligible position. The expected salary range is \$180,000–\$200,000, commensurate with qualifications.

The City of Omaha offers a comprehensive benefits package, including:

- Health insurance with major medical, vision, and dental coverage for the individual and family, including funding of an HSA
- Defined benefit pension program
- Fourteen paid holidays
- Generous paid sick and vacation leave

LOCATION AND REQUIREMENTS

This position is based in Omaha, Nebraska. The Director is expected to be present and engaged across the city's parks system and community. Possession of, or the ability to obtain, a valid driver's license is required.

TO APPLY

Please visit PotreroGroup.com/Omaha and select "Apply Here." Applications should include a resume, a cover letter describing your qualifications that match the position criteria and what you will bring to the role.

Interested candidates should apply by April 30, 2026, for priority consideration.

START DATE

August 3, 2026

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

More information on the City of Omaha Parks & Recreation Department can be found at parks.cityofomaha.org.

For additional information regarding this opportunity, please contact Andrew Leider, Potrero Group Managing Director and Search Lead, at aleider@potrerogroup.com.

City of Omaha is an Equal Opportunity Employer

The City of Omaha is an Equal Opportunity Employer committed to creating a diverse and inclusive workforce. We encourage all qualified individuals to apply, especially those who reflect the rich cultural diversity of our community.

Potrero Group

Potrero Group is honored to coordinate this search on behalf of the City of Omaha. We support innovative leaders, organizations, and municipalities making a difference in their communities with strategic planning, facilitation, organizational development, and board and executive search services. We are committed to equitable and inclusive practices in all of our work. To join our mailing list or for more information, please visit PotreroGroup.com.