



OMAHA PARKS & RECREATION

# Director of Parks, Recreation and Public Property

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



# This Is Omaha:

## A Vibrant, Affordable, and Welcoming City



Omaha's got big city energy with a small-town welcome

### Quality of Life

Omaha consistently ranks among the best cities in the United States for quality of life—*U.S. News & World Report* has repeatedly placed Omaha on its Best Places to Live list, citing its affordability, strong job market, and community character, offering the energy of a major metro with the safety and community spirit that larger cities rarely sustain.

### Housing and Education

Walkable urban neighborhoods like Dundee, Midtown, and Aksarben offer historic homes, local restaurants, and strong community character. Families will find excellent neighborhood options accessible from the city core or in suburban areas such as Elkhorn, Papillion, and Millard, which feature top-rated schools, including the A-rated Elkhorn Public School district and Westside Community Schools.

### Public Investment

Omaha backs its ambitions with real dollars. More than \$400M in public and private investment has revitalized the Downtown Riverfront, producing Gene Leahy Mall, Heartland of America Park, and more. Across the metro, more than \$5B in development projects have been announced or completed in recent years.

### Philanthropic Commitment

Omaha is home to several significant foundations and philanthropic organizations, along with individual donors, who annually infuse hundreds of millions of dollars into arts, culture, parks, housing, education, infrastructure, and many other aspects of Omaha's amazing quality of life. Public/private partnerships are a cornerstone of building a better Omaha for all residents.

## Arts and Culture

The Joslyn Art Museum houses a world-class collection spanning 5,000 years of art history. The Holland Performing Arts Center is one of the finest concert halls in the Midwest. Each summer, the College World Series transforms Omaha into a national destination, generating community-wide energy that defines the city's summers. The recent addition of the Steelhouse venue has created a much-needed live performance venue unique to the region, attracting artists of all genres and appealing to residents and visitors of all ages and walks of life.

## Dining and Entertainment

Omaha boasts more James Beard Award nominees and winners per capita than many cities twice its size. The historic Old Market District, with its cobblestone streets lined with galleries, restaurants, and boutiques, serves as the city's culinary heart. The Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium, ranked among the world's top zoos, draws more than 1.7 million visitors annually.



# Omaha Parks and Recreation

We believe that Omaha's parks belong to everyone. We are committed to building a leadership team that reflects the diversity of our community and ensures equitable access to recreational opportunities for all residents.

– Omaha Parks Department

PARKITECT®

Omaha's Parks and Recreation system stands among the city's greatest public assets. A dynamic network of more than 11,000 acres of parkland across 256 parks, served by a \$66M public operating budget, and significant philanthropic partnership and investment. From neighborhood trails and community centers to swimming pools, splash pads, and championship golf courses, the system delivers year-round recreational opportunities that enrich the lives of residents of all ages and backgrounds.

The department's reach extends well beyond green space, spanning park development and maintenance, recreation programming, landscape architecture, golf and aquatics, urban forestry, and public property management. Signature destinations such as Gene Leahy Mall, Heartland of America Park, the newly revitalized Downtown Riverfront, and the soon-to-open Levi Carter Park Multi-Purpose Sports and Activity Center and the upgraded Tranquility Park Soccer Complex attract regional and national tournaments and reflect the city's commitment to world-class public spaces that inspire civic pride and draw visitors from across the region.

Now, Omaha is setting its sights higher by committing the vision, resources, and leadership necessary to achieve its

bold, generational goal of becoming a Top 10 Parks City in the United States. Community leaders are committed to supporting the investments and connections that will help the Director of Parks, Recreation and Public Property hit the ground running and sustain the vision and momentum seen throughout the city.

## Parks and Recreation Mission



Provide and maintain a comprehensive park system, manage public property, and offer opportunities for the citizens and visitors of the Omaha community that encourage a healthy, positive lifestyle that is essential to a supreme quality of life.

## Parks and Recreation Vision



Omaha Parks and Recreation is focused on providing opportunities and experiences to meet the community's evolving needs. Through industry trends, best practices, technology, community engagement, and public/private partnerships, we are committed to establishing excellence in health and wellness, interaction with nature, and social enrichment for all Omaha residents.

# Parks and Recreation Department Comprehensive Master Plan Priorities



## Priority 1: Build Organizational Capacity

Strengthen internal operations, workforce systems, and strategic partnerships to improve service delivery and support long-term sustainability.



## Priority 2: Secure Sustainable Funding

Pursue long-term funding mechanisms, such as a Park District Assessment or General Obligation Bonds, to address gaps in maintenance, staffing, and capital improvements.



## Priority 3: Expand Access to Underserved Areas

Ensure all residents can reach quality parks, trails, and facilities by addressing geographic gaps, infrastructure barriers, and underserved areas.



## Priority 4: Take Care of Existing Assets

Prioritize maintenance, renovation, and reinvestment in existing parks and facilities to help ensure lasting quality and community pride.



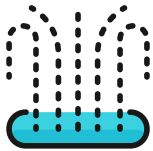
## Priority 5: Expand Recreation Access and Participation

Respond to community demand by growing summer camps, adult fitness, nature-based programs, and family-friendly events while improving affordability, outreach, and geographic access.

### Parks, Facilities, Staff, and Amenities at a Glance

163 Full-time Staff	175,000+ Rounds of Golf per Year	2 Tennis Centers
959 Part-time and Seasonal Staff	3 Indoor Pools	134 Baseball/Softball Fields
256 Parks	14 Outdoor Pools	126 Soccer Fields
11,000 Acres of Parkland	14 Spray Grounds	3 Cricket Fields
125+ Miles of Trails	12 Community Centers	2 Football Fields
4 18-hole Golf Courses	1 Ice Rink	2 Nature Centers
4 9-hole Golf Courses	1 Marina at Dodge Park	1 Trap and Skeet Range

To learn more about the Comprehensive Master Plan, visit [parks.cityofomaha.org/master-plans/](https://parks.cityofomaha.org/master-plans/)



## 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.

# Responsibilities

## 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 Experience 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.

Please visit [PotreroGroup.com/Omaha](https://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. The position is open until filled.

## To Apply

## Start Date

Fall 2026

## Additional Information

More information on the City of Omaha Parks & Recreation Department can be found at [parks.cityofomaha.org](https://parks.cityofomaha.org).

For additional information regarding this opportunity, please contact Andrew Leider, Potrero Group Managing Director and Search Lead, at [aleider@potrergroup.com](mailto:aleider@potrergroup.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 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](https://PotreroGroup.com).