



**PARK AND RECREATION
DIRECTOR**
City of **Fort Worth, Texas**

Recruitment Services Provided By





The Opportunity

The City of Fort Worth, Texas offers an exciting and unique opportunity to lead the 12th largest city's park and recreation offerings into a new era following the upcoming retirement of Richard Zavala who has been the City's Director since 1992. The new Park and Recreation Director will benefit from planning investments including a bold greenspace initiative and an organizational strategy, and will also play a key role in the final shaping of its Park, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan.

About Fort Worth

A city of Cowboys and Culture, Fort Worth is known for its Texas hospitality. Exuding both charm and expansiveness, Fort Worth is the 12th largest and one of the fastest-growing big cities in the United States. Distinguished as one of the fastest growing urban centers in the nation. With great neighborhoods, scenic terrain, and a rich history of arts and culture, paired with world-class opportunities for business and education, it's not only fun to visit Fort Worth, but it's even more rewarding to call it home. Fort Worth offers all the benefits and amenities of a bustling metropolitan city while keeping the small-town charm that keeps it unpretentious and charismatic in all the right ways.

Once an essential stop on the legendary cattle drives from Texas to Kansas and home to cattle barons and oil wildcatters, today, this city seamlessly blends its cattle and oil heritage with a vast array of businesses, industries, and entertainment. Known for a commitment to preserving its history, this modern city proudly celebrates the famous Stockyards National Historic District, home to twice-a-day cattle drives, Billy Bob's Texas — the world's largest honky-tonk — and Mule Alley, formerly the horse and mule barns used during World War I and now home to restaurants, shops, western heritage brands, and creative workspaces.



About Fort Worth

The city's downtown includes Sundance Square, a 35-block business and entertainment district featuring architecture from the Victorian, Art Deco, and modern eras. Cultural district boasts world renowned museums, galleries, and public gardens. Major events include the MAIN ST Fort Worth Arts Festival, Mayfest – Fort Worth, and the iconic Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo. In fact, Money Magazine once proclaimed that "Fort Worth offers big city arts and entertainment without the attitude or high prices of comparable metros."

The city's proximity to Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport, located midway between the two cities, has enticed some of the best-known names in commerce and industry to locate their headquarters in Fort Worth, including American Airlines, BNSF Railway, Lockheed Martin Tactical Aircraft Systems, and Bell Flight. Transportation, healthcare, and manufacturing are driving factors behind employment in the city and, as Fort Worth has emerged as a popular tourist destination, the hospitality and travel sector has become a significant economic generator. Other significant employers include JPS Health Network, Cook Children's Health Care System, Naval Air Station Fort Worth Joint Reserve Base, Texas Health Resources, and Alcon, as well as city and county governments and the Fort Worth Independent School District. In addition, the City of Fort Worth has several significant projects underway, including a new city hall and the continued development of Panther Island, a mixed-use development north of downtown.

Fort Worth, Texas has been recognized as a top travel destination for 2024 by Travel + Leisure for its unique blend of modern attractions and rich Western heritage. Beyond its cowboy roots, Fort Worth boasts a vibrant arts scene, cool boutique hotels, and a growing dining culture. Additionally, the city is gaining attention for its booming workforce, earning a spot as one of the best cities for workforce growth, according to CultureMap Dallas. This North Texas gem is quickly rising as both a top place to visit and a hub for career opportunities.

Access to health care and education are important quality-of-life factors, and Fort Worth offers an abundance of both. The city lays claim to one of the finest medical communities in Texas, including Cook Children's Health Care System, Baylor Scott & White All Saints Medical Center, Texas Health Harris Methodist Hospital, UT Southwestern Monty and Tex Moncrief Medical Center, Medical City Fort Worth, JPS Health Network, and the TCU School of Medicine. As to education, Fort Worth's Texas Christian University (TCU), one of the state's most prestigious universities, offers more than 100 undergraduate majors in arts and sciences, business, fine arts, communications, education, engineering, and nursing. Texas A&M School of Law, Texas Wesleyan University, and the UNT Health Science Center draw students from around the country and beyond, while Tarrant County College District serves the community across multiple campuses.





City Government

The City of Fort Worth operates under a council-manager form of government. The City Council comprises the mayor, elected at-large, and ten City Council members who represent single-member districts, all serving two-year terms. The City Council adopts municipal ordinances and resolutions, makes proclamations, sets the tax rate, and approves the budget. Positions appointed by the Council include the City Manager, City Secretary, City Attorney, City Auditor, municipal court judges, and City board and commission members.

The Fort Worth City Council's strategic vision priorities to enhance quality of life include:

- Economic Development & Community Investment
- Community Safety
- Infrastructure, Responsible Growth, and Fiscal Responsibility

The Department

Fort Worth's Park & Recreation Department, a nationally accredited agency, maintains 302 parks (13,070 acres) and public spaces citywide, and provides recreational activities and educational programming that make Fort Worth a great place to live, work and play. The department provides its services with 544 FTE (851 total) employees and an annual budget of \$87.5 million. Reporting to the Director are a Deputy Director, two Assistant Directors, a Public Information Officer, and a Senior Administrative Assistant. A Council-appointed Park & Recreation Advisory Board is responsible for providing policy recommendations and information to the City Manager and the City Council about citizen needs and requests that will improve the services of the Department.

The Park & Recreation Department is responsible for planning, designing, developing, and maintaining the city's network of parks, trails, and public rights-of-way, as well as the planning and administration of the city's recreational programs. The Department is organized into five divisions.

The **Administration Division** provides overall administrative support to the department, including the coordination of volunteer activities, public information & communications, equipment/vehicles, safety management, fiscal and human resources, purchasing, management of the Fort Worth Zoo contract, and staff support for the Park & Recreation Advisory Board.

The **Park Operations Division** manages the General Fund operations for the Water Gardens, park reservations, and the management of various operations-related contracts. These contracts include instructors for the Park & Recreation and Neighborhood Services Departments, leases, licenses, professional services, adopt-a-park programs, and grounds maintenance. At present the scope for the ground maintenance contracts includes mowing, litter removal, select herbicide application, planting bed maintenance and irrigation repair in city parks, medians, rights-of-way, commercial corridors, tax-foreclosed properties, as well as some other departments' city-owned properties. This division also manages the Botanical Research Institute of Texas contract, and the Crime Control and Prevention District (CCPD) funded Graffiti Abatement Program.

The **Recreation Division** manages 21 community centers, the Log Cabin Village, the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge, Forest Park and Marine Park Pools, Sycamore Sprayground, and management contracts related to various facilities programmed by outside entities.

The **Planning and Resource Management Division** manages the identification of park system needs/inventory, new parkland acquisition, oversight of park development projects, park system infrastructure maintenance, in-house small capital project construction, and the supply and care of trees on city-owned property. Additionally, this division is responsible for tracking the expenditure of park gas well funds in compliance with the city's Financial Management Policy Statements.

The **Golf and Athletics Division** includes the Municipal Golf Fund and the General Fund athletic facilities and programs. Athletics includes Haws Athletics Center, McLeland Tennis Center, Sycamore Community Center, athletics maintenance, adult and youth athletics programs, portions of the CCPD-Parks Community Policing Programs, and the CCPD-Funded Late Night Program.



\$ 87.5M Operating Budget **544 FTE** Employees





The Position

Reporting to an Assistant City Manager, the Park and Recreation Director provides strategic leadership of the Park and Recreation Department and maintains partnerships with private, civic, and public entities who maintain a key role in building and stewarding Fort Worth's park system. Key responsibilities include:

- Casting and championing the vision for the Park and Recreation Department, and providing leadership with planning, coordinating, administering, and evaluating programs, projects, processes, procedures, systems, standards, and service offerings.
- Working with staff and city leadership to establish and implement capital and operational budget priorities through the annual budget process.
- Leading and inspiring staff, which includes prioritizing and assigning work, conducting performance evaluations, ensuring staff are trained, ensuring employees follow policies and procedures, maintaining a healthy and safe working environment, and making hiring, termination, and disciplinary decisions or recommendations.
- Directing the development and implementation of departmental goals, objectives, and policies.
- Establishing appropriate service and staffing levels, monitoring and evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of services offered by the department and allocating resources accordingly.
- Assessing and monitoring workload, administrative and support systems and internal reporting relationships, identifying opportunities for improvement, and directing and implementing changes.
- Providing executive level staff assistance to an Assistant City Manager, participating on a variety of boards, commissions and committees, and providing staff support to assigned boards and commissions.

Challenges & Opportunities

The next Director of Park and Recreation will have some foreseeable challenges and opportunities in which to excel:

- Much work and expense has been dedicated to planning for the upcoming decades. The [Good Natured Initiative](#) is a greenspace plan in partnership with other agencies to create a path for Fort Worth to be the greenest big city in the country. The Fort Worth Parks Aspirational Plan will provide guidance to prepare the department for the necessary growth ahead. Finally, a new Park, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan is underway and expected to be completed in the coming months. Combined, these plans create a framework for Fort Worth's desire to significantly increase service levels and offerings – and in the fastest growing city in its class.
- The new Director will have the support of a passionate and experienced department management team who is eager to pursue a bold new vision and culture.
- Partnerships represent an underutilized tool and a significant opportunity for growth under future leadership. While the department holds large management agreements with organizations like the Botanic Research Institute of Texas (BRIT) and the Fort Worth Zoological Association, the vision for an expanded and improved system will require much more robust partnerships with organizations across all sectors.
- Community engagement strategies and practices represent an area of opportunity, proactively and consistently seeking community involvement in programming, design, and other elements of service delivery.
- Environmental sustainability, preservation, and natural resource management will need to be key tenets of the future of the Fort Worth Park system, with significant opportunities for innovation and partnership as the system grows and evolves.





Ideal Candidate

The most successful candidates for Director of Park and Recreation will have the following attributes:

- A contemporary understanding of best practices and future trends in parks and recreation on a national level will support Fort Worth's desire to achieve best-in-class status. This understanding is ideally formed through experience and a proven track record.
- An innate dissatisfaction with the status quo. The next Director will relentlessly seek continual improvement and drive a culture of the same.
- Refined people skills are critical, not only in the provision of effective leadership, but also in forming and nurturing critical partnerships across the Fort Worth community.
- Effective change management skills are essential, especially for an organization that has had consistent leadership for over 30 years. It is critical that the new director have the ability to craft a vision, effectively communicate it, and garner its support.
- Experience in parks and recreation master planning is essential, as the new Director will likely have a role in shaping the final stages of its master plan which is expected to be completed in the coming months. Importantly, the next Director will be tasked with putting the plan into action.
- The department recently achieved its first accreditation through CAPRA, and the new Director will be tasked with providing leadership to support an accredited agency.
- Even for a large city, there is an expectation for the Director to be visible and engaged – frequently out of the office and in workplaces, and present at special events.

Qualifications

The following are the minimum qualifications for the Park and Recreation Director:

Education: Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with major course work in recreational science, physical education, horticulture, public or business administration, social services, or a related field.

Experience: Eight years of increasingly responsible experience in parks and recreation services, including four years of marketing, administrative and supervisory responsibility.





Salary & Benefits

The City of Fort Worth is offering a salary range of **\$180,000 to \$195,000** for this position, commensurate with experience and qualifications. In addition, the City provides a benefits plan that includes medical, dental, vision, life, and long-term disability insurance, a pension plan (Fort Worth Employees' Retirement Fund), and a 457 deferred compensation plan. Partnering with Southwestern Health Resources, the City provides access to three employee health centers exclusive to Fort Worth employees, retirees, and their enrolled dependents.

Application & Selection Process

To be considered for this position, interested candidates must submit a cover letter and résumé online no later than **Monday, December 9, 2024**, at:

www.mosaicpublic.com/careers

IMPORTANT DATES:

Semifinalist interviews (virtual): **Tuesday, January 7, 2025**

Finalist interviews (in-person): **Friday, January 17, 2025**

CONFIDENTIAL INQUIRIES ARE WELCOMED TO:

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