



CITY OF AUSTIN

# Director of Parks and Recreation







## The Position

The City of Austin is seeking a highly qualified individual to fill the Director of Parks and Recreation position. Under the direction of an Assistant City Manager, the Director of Parks and Recreation is responsible for directing, planning, and providing progressive leadership for the department's operations, staff, programs, and facilities. The Director exercises strategic and visionary thinking that have positive long-term organization and community-wide applications.

The Department's vision is to be an innovative leader in parks and recreation experiences, and its mission is to inspire Austin to learn, play, protect, and connect by creating diverse programs and experiences, in sustainable, natural spaces, and public places. The Director of Parks and Recreation oversees the development, implementation, and evaluation of programs and services that support the Department's mission, vision, and values.

The position oversees and directs policies, procedures, and regulations pertaining to the City's Parks and Recreation facilities; land assets, acquisition, and management; as well as providing cemetery oversight. The Director also implements realistic goals and objectives, and actively collaborates with staff, while overseeing programs and activities among various City departments, neighborhood associations, public agencies, private sector representatives, and other non-governmental agencies.

The Director develops and manages the department's budget and coordinates developing and implementing specific, measurable outcomes aligned with the Citywide strategic plan. The leader will prepare reports and memoranda on departmental activities and serve with other directors as a member of the Executive Leadership Team. In addition, the Director of Parks and Recreation actively partners with others to support cross-departmental collaboration and integration.

Through a hands-on and human-centered approach, the Director of Parks and Recreation is responsible for the full range of supervisory activities, including selection, training, evaluation, counseling, and recommendation for dismissal, while maintaining a commitment to employee well-being.

This position directly manages a leadership team including three Assistant Directors and one Chief Administrative Officer. The Director maintains a healthy and safe work environment and provides high-level supervision of staff by prioritizing and assigning work, staying connected and accessible, conducting performance evaluations, and ensuring that employees follow policies and procedures.



## Key Areas of Focus

The next Director of Parks and Recreation will have several exciting challenges to address and areas of opportunity to excel. Among these is the need to:

- Develop relationships with leadership, community, and staff by fostering strong, collaborative relationships with city leadership, community members, and park staff.
- Create a renewed vision and guide future growth by engaging the community and stakeholders to define a new, achievable vision for the parks system and develop a guidebook for future investments to ensure the parks system supports residents, employees, and visitors as Austin grows.
- Enhance park access and activate urban spaces by improving and expanding access to parks for all residents, ensuring equitable distribution, and enhancing and activating urban public spaces to serve as community hubs.
- Expand parkland by acquiring 4,000 to 8,000 acres of new parkland over the next decade to keep pace with population growth while utilizing a high level of service to prioritize parkland acquisition and improve access in underserved areas.
- Align programs with community interests and promote inclusivity by ensuring park programs meet the diverse interests and needs of the community and ensuring they are inclusive and accessible to all community members.
- Expand educational opportunities and improve connectivity by developing and promoting educational programming within parks to foster learning and community involvement and build stronger walking, bicycling, and trail connections to parks and key city infrastructure, including transit lines.
- Develop public-private partnerships by collaborating with private entities and community organizations to support park development and programming.







## The Community

People in Austin enjoy the wide variety of what the City offers, including restaurants, museums, and nature trails, attending University of Texas Football tailgating parties and games, browsing local shopping meccas and vintage shops, and cheering on the Austin FC at the Q2 Stadium. By any traditional measure, Austin is thriving. Fueled by an influx of people and businesses, Greater Austin is one of the country's fastest-growing regions. Austin is currently the 11th largest city in the U.S. and is projected to be the 3rd largest metro in the U.S. by 2100.

U.S. News & World Report releases a series of lists each year, including the highly respected 150 Best Places to Live. They consider many factors to determine the best, including quality of life, the local job market, value for money, and the place's desirability. Austin is ranked #9 in the U.S. and #1 in Texas for 2024-2025 on that list. Austin is ranked #9 best places to find a job in the US from 2024-2025. On additional U.S. News and World Report lists, Austin's University of Texas ranked as the #1 public university in Texas, 9th best public university in the nation, 32nd among private and public universities, and 12 Austin Metro area high schools made the Best High Schools list. The highest ranked in Austin is #38, and AISD's Liberal Arts and Science Academy (LASA) is ranked #6 in Texas.

Austin is ranked #7 in the hottest job market by the Wall Street Journal for 2024 and #15 in Money Geeks' 2024 Top Cities for U.S. Job Seekers. In support of the LGBTQ people who live and work in Austin, in 2024, the City of Austin scored 100 points out of 100 on the Municipal Equality Index from the Human Rights Campaign. Additional awards include #8 Best Run Cities for Education and Veterans to Live by WalletHub 2024: Overall Rank of #1 in the Top 10 Metro Areas for STEM Professionals by WalletHub for 2024.

Austin attracts many visitors with its live music events. It's one of the top things to do in Austin, though there's music to enjoy throughout the year – not only during the South by Southwest and Austin City Limits festivals. As the “live music capital of the world,” Austin serenades the community with live music in the airport terminal, on the downtown streets, and at about 200 venues. Museums in town include The Contemporary Austin, the Blanton Museum of Art, and the Mexic-Arte Museum. Austin offers many community centers, gardens, parks, libraries, churches, synagogues, temples, and other houses of worship and contemplation.

Emerging as a player on the international scene, Austin is well known for its diverse events such as the Austin Marathon, Rodeo Austin, Austin Urban Music Festival, Blues on the Green, Austin Pride Festival, Austin Trail of Lights, SXSW, Austin City Limits, and Formula 1. The city is home to notable employers such as the State of Texas, Apple, the University of Texas, Samsung, Austin Semiconductor, Dell Technologies, Oracle, Meta, IBM, Tesla, Google, Applied Materials, St. David's Medical Center, Indeed, Emerson, and Ascension Seton Health.

Located at the edge of the Texas Hill Country – rolling terrain of limestone bluffs, springs, rivers, and lakes – Austin's climate is ideal for year-round jogging, cycling, hiking on the city's many trails, or swimming at Barton Springs or one of the area's many other swimming holes. There are several excellent golf courses in the area, as well as opportunities for rowing, kayaking, canoeing, camping, rock climbing, disc golf, mountain biking, fishing, and more. Austin has something for everyone.



## Austin City Government

The City of Austin is a progressive, full-service municipal organization operating under the Council-Manager form of government. Austin's mayor is elected from the City at large, and ten Council members are elected from single-member districts. The terms of the Mayor and Council members are four years, and terms are staggered so that a general election is held every two years, with half the Council being elected at each election. Term limits for the Mayor and Council members provide for two consecutive four-year terms. The City Council is responsible for the appointment of the City Manager, who is the Chief Administrative and Executive Officer of the City, City Clerk, City Auditor, Municipal Court Judges, and the Municipal Court Clerk.

To learn more about the dynamic City of Austin, visit [austintexas.gov](https://austintexas.gov).

## The Parks and Recreation Department

The Austin Parks and Recreation Department has stewarded the City of Austin's public lands since 1928. As such, we protect and maintain parkland and our urban forest. We preserve trails and offer a variety of sports, recreation, educational enrichment, arts programs, cultural opportunities, and nature and aquatic activities.

Our department is as diverse as the community we serve. As in so many aspects of life, the key to running a successful organization is striking a balance between young and old, tradition and innovation, and the needs of one versus the needs of many. Keeping this in mind, our employees continually strive to honor the past while embracing the challenges of the future and to serve an entire community while maintaining meaningful connections with individual participants.

**Mission:** Inspire Austin to learn, play, protect, and connect by creating diverse programs and experiences in sustainable natural spaces and public places.





## The Successful Candidate

The successful candidate for the Director of Parks and Recreation position will demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the principles and practices of parks and recreation as well as public administration. Alongside a robust knowledge of local, state, and federal laws, ordinances, and regulations, this individual will be well-versed in the operational characteristics, services, and activities integral to parks maintenance and recreation programs. The Director of Parks and Recreation is passionate about people, parks, recreation, arts, and culture and is deeply committed to articulating and promoting the value of services offered through the Austin Parks and Recreation system. This candidate will possess the ability to lead with a vision that aligns with the City's strategic goals, fostering a collaborative and inclusive environment that promotes the well-being and engagement of all community members.

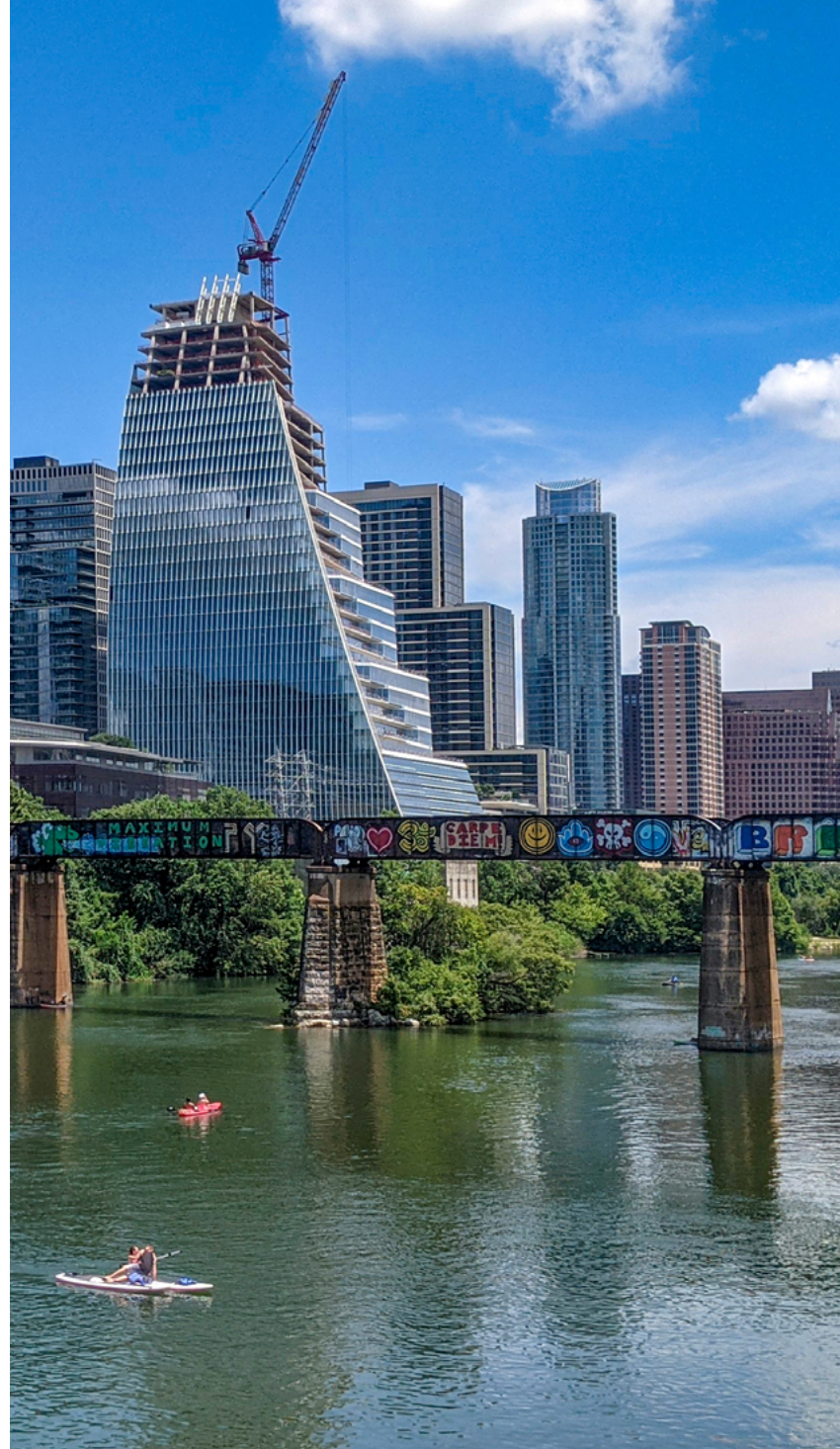
The ideal candidate will have a thorough understanding of public administration principles and practices, including organizational and management theory. A familiarity with the operational characteristics, services, and activities associated with parks maintenance and recreation programs is essential.

Additionally, the successful candidate will have a keen insight into the City's ethnic and cultural demographics, with an understanding of the concerns and needs of community groups and special interest organizations. They will be knowledgeable in public relations, marketing, and public information concepts and practices essential for promoting the department's initiatives and programs. Awareness of environmental regulations related to public lands, urban preserves, recreational facilities, and waterways is also essential.

Expertise in the development, maintenance, and construction of recreational facilities, coupled with strong project management skills, will be crucial. The candidate should have proficiency in supervisory and managerial techniques and principles to lead a diverse team effectively. Exceptional oral and written communication skills are essential for interacting with various stakeholders and ensuring transparent, concise information dissemination.

The ability to handle multiple tasks efficiently and prioritize responsibilities effectively is a must. The candidate should also possess technical proficiency in using computers and related software applications for data management, communication, and analysis. Competence in data analysis and problem-solving is necessary to make informed decisions and optimize department operations.

Furthermore, the successful candidate will have expertise in fiscal planning, budget preparation, and analyzing financial reports and studies. They should be capable of preparing and administering long-range plans and capital improvement programs that address current and future demands on the parks and recreation system. Finally, the candidate must have the capacity to maintain effective communication and working relationships with boards and commissions, outside agencies, city employees, and the public.

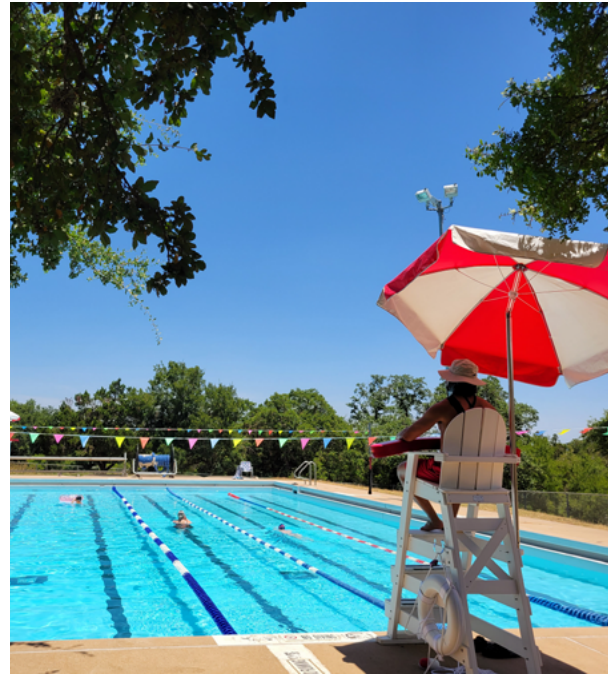




## Qualifications

The following are the minimum qualifications required for the Director of Parks and Recreation:

- **Education and Experience:** Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with major coursework in Park or Recreation Administration, Public Administration, Business Administration, or closely related, plus eight years of related experience, five of which were in a managerial capacity. Master's degree from an accredited college or university may substitute for two years of the required experience.
- **Licenses or Certifications:** May be required to obtain a Certified Park and Recreation Professional Certificate (CPRP) or Certified Park and Recreation Executive (CPRE) issued by the National Recreation and Parks Association within one year from the date of employment. A valid Texas Class C driver's license or have the ability to obtain within ninety days of employment.



## Compensation and Benefits

The salary range is competitive, based on experience and qualifications, with an excellent benefits package. The benefits package includes medical, dental and vision coverage, life insurance, compensated leave, short-term disability, and retirement benefits. The city is a member of the Proportionate Retirement Program. Optional benefits include supplemental life insurance, a 457 deferred compensation plan, long-term disability plan, and a legal plan. Visit [austintexas.gov/department/active-employee-benefits](https://austintexas.gov/department/active-employee-benefits) to learn more about the City's employee benefits.



## How to Apply

Applications will be accepted electronically by Raftelis at [jobs.crelate.com](https://jobs.crelate.com). Applicants complete a brief online form and are prompted to provide a cover letter and resume. The position will be open until filled with a first review of applications beginning **October 15, 2024**.

Information submitted for consideration may be made available to the public in compliance with the Texas Open Records Act. Interested candidates are encouraged to contact one of the recruiters below before submitting materials.



## Questions

Please direct questions to Pamela Wideman at [pwideman@raftelis.com](mailto:pwideman@raftelis.com) or 704-287-3649 and Robert Colichio at [rcolichio@raftelis.com](mailto:rcolichio@raftelis.com) or 503-866-4213.