

THE CITY OF LOUISVILLE



LOUISVILLE
PARKS
AND RECREATION

IS SEEKING A NEW DIRECTOR OF LOUISVILLE PARKS AND RECREATION



LOUISVILLE METRO PROFILE & HISTORY

Louisville is the largest city in the Commonwealth of Kentucky and the 29th most-populous city in the United States. Named for King Louis XVI of France, it was founded in 1778 by George Rogers Clark, making it one of the oldest cities west of the Appalachian Mountains. Located beside the Falls of the Ohio, the only major obstruction to river traffic between the upper Ohio River and the Gulf of Mexico, the settlement quickly became one of the busiest ports in the United States.

While its initial growth was slow, the advent of the steamboat in the early 1800s sparked booming industrial development, and by 1830 Louisville had secured its place as the largest city in Kentucky.

Owing to its strategic location at the Falls of the Ohio, Louisville was a major commercial center. River transportation was supplemented by the construction of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad, which was chartered in 1850 and operated more than 1,800 miles of line in the state by 1920. Joseph E. Seagram and Sons opened the world's largest distillery in Louisville following the repeal of prohibition.

Louisville was also a city of firsts. In the reform-minded progressive era of the 1880's the city was the first in the nation to introduce the secret ballot, significantly reducing vote fraud. It was the first city in Kentucky to adopt zoning and planning measures to control and shape urban growth.

Home to the first bridge designed exclusively for motor vehicles to cross the Ohio River, Louisville was also the



birthplace of Mary Millicent Miller, the first woman in the United States to receive a steamboat master's license.

The city has been home to a number of men and women who changed the face of American history. President Zachary Taylor was reared in surrounding Jefferson County, and two U.S. Supreme Court Justices, including Louis D. Brandeis, the first Jewish Justice, were from the city proper. John James Audubon was a local shopkeeper in the early years of his career, drawing birds in his spare time. Second Lt. F. Scott Fitzgerald, stationed at Camp Zachary Taylor during World War I, was a frequent presence at the bar in the famous Seelbach Hotel, immortalized in the novel *The Great Gatsby*. Muhammad Ali, perhaps the greatest heavyweight boxer of all time, was born in Louisville and won six Golden Glove tournaments in Kentucky. Notable figures in the world of entertainment the city has produced include Tom Cruise, Jennifer Lawrence, Hunter S. Thompson, Jack Harlow and the alt-rock band My Morning Jacket.

Today, the city is known as the home of the Kentucky Derby, Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC), the University of Louisville and its Louisville Cardinals athletic teams, Louisville Slugger baseball bats, and three of Kentucky's six Fortune 500 companies - being Humana, Kindred Healthcare and Yum! Brands. Its main airport is also the site of United Parcel Service's worldwide air hub. Louisville is also the world's capital of "bourbonism" - 95 percent of the world's bourbon is produced in Kentucky, and Louisville is home to the Kentucky Bourbon Trail, which leads to Frankfort, Bardstown and Shelbyville, among other nearby destinations.



**LOUISVILLE'S PARKS
AND RECREATION
DEPARTMENT IS ACCREDITED
BY THE NATIONAL
RECREATION AND PARKS
ASSOCIATION**

DESCRIPTION OF GOVERNMENT

The current government of Louisville, Kentucky was created after the merger of the governments of the City of Louisville, Kentucky and Jefferson County, Kentucky, and is referred to as Louisville Metro Government. It is organized under a mayor-council system. The Mayor is elected to four-year terms and is responsible for the administration of Metro Government. The Louisville Metro Council is a unicameral body consisting of 26 members, each elected from a geographic district, normally for four-year terms. The Mayor is limited to three consecutive terms, while members of the Louisville Metro Council are not term limited.

Department Directors, including the Director of Parks & Recreation, are appointed by the Mayor. The Director reports to one of the Deputy Mayors.

DIRECTOR OF PARKS & RECREATION

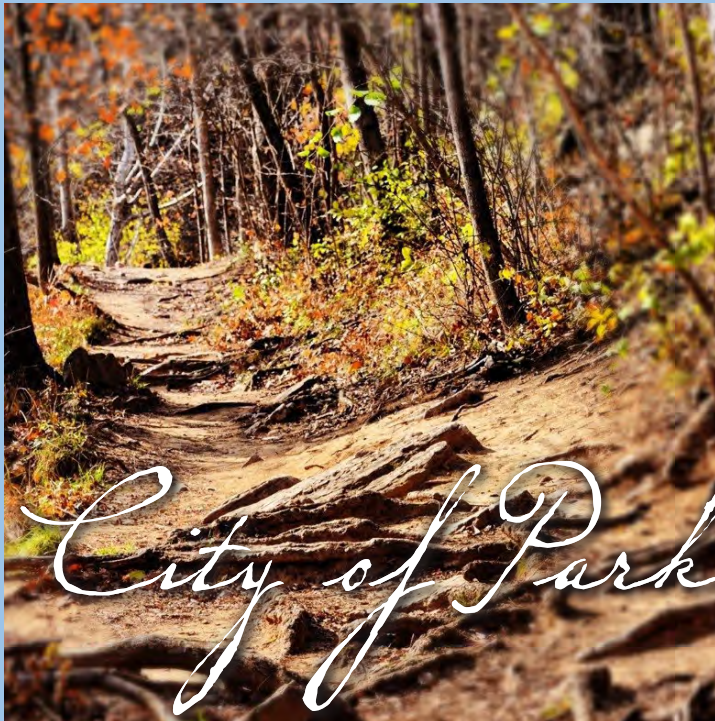
The Director is responsible to the Office of the Mayor for the proper administration of all Department affairs as outlined in the Charter. The Director oversees and manages all municipal service functions and day-to-day operations of the Department. The Director performs personnel management, participates in collective bargaining, labor relations; and is involved in the selection of department employees.

The Director works with the Mayor's office to develop strategic priorities and annual budgets in partnership with other departments and Metro Council. The Director administers all laws and ordinances related to the department. The Director implements policies and manages operations. The Director of Parks & Recreation implements the department budget, as well as oversees the maintenance of department assets and facilities.

The Director researches issues of concern for the Mayor and Metro Council and makes recommendations for their review. The Director works collaboratively with internal and external stakeholders to promote Metro Parks while maintaining their essential character. The Director represents Metro in regional and Commonwealth meetings to ensure awareness of programs and opportunities that may affect the community and serves as voice and advocate for Metro Louisville's interests.



CITY OF PARKS



The Eva Bandman Cyclocross Venue, which hosted the 2013 World Championships, was the first time this event was held outside of Europe. In 2018 Joe Creason Park hosted the USA Cycling National Cyclocross Championships.



Iroquois Park is the host of the very popular, annual Jack O'Lantern Spectacular, created in 2013 by Passion For Pumpkins, Inc. and operated as a fundraiser for the Parks Alliance.

A cricket field at Hays Kennedy Park is established in 2017 and dedicated in the name of Indian superstar Sunil Gavaskar.



Louisville Metro Parks and Recreation continues to be re-accredited by the National Recreation and Parks Association.

Louisville is known as the City of Parks for good reasons. Louisville's park system is the last designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, the "Father of American Landscape Architecture," and one of only five such systems across the country.

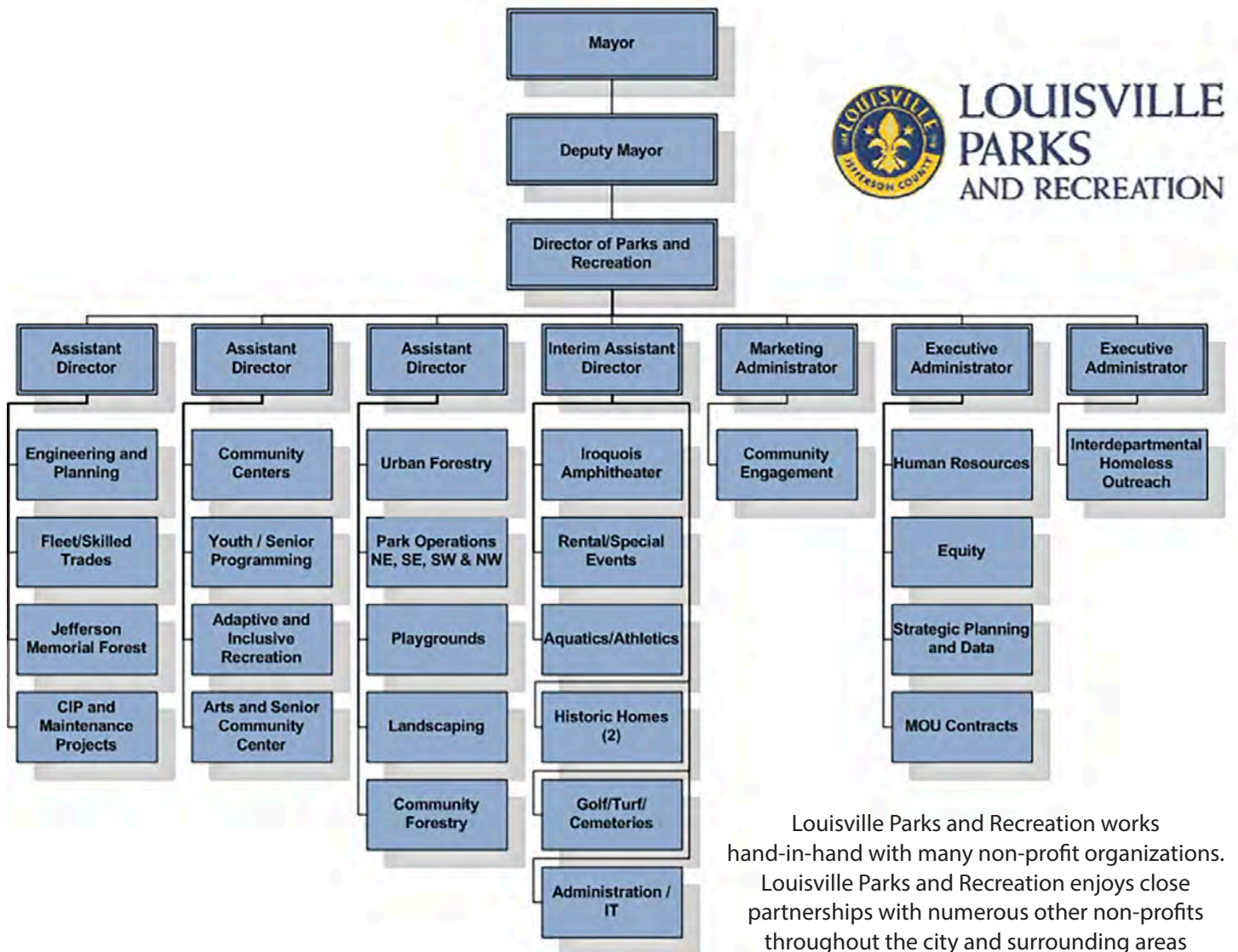
When Olmsted was commissioned to design a park system for Louisville in 1891, he was already the acknowledged father of America landscape design, famous for his work on Central Park in New York, the U.S. Capitol Grounds, and the Biltmore estate grounds. Some have considered Olmsted's greatest achievement his concept of creating a system of parks connected to tree-lined parkways, instead of freestanding parks as was the common practice. Known nationally as the defining park system of his career, his concept was most fully realized in Louisville, reflecting the genius of Olmsted's vision.

Louisville's Olmsted parks and parkways form a unique component to the fabric of the city, a contributing factor to the quality of life for all citizens. One hundred years after the first Olmsted recommendations for Cherokee, Iroquois and Shawnee parks, the value of the clearly planned system of large, landscaped parks connected by tree-lined parkways, and smaller parks, playgrounds, and squares is greater than ever. In one way or another, parks could improve almost every aspect of life for individuals and the community at large.

Louisville's parks, natural areas, and forests are invaluable assets for the metro area, accounting for nearly 6,050 acres in parks, parkways, and greenways plus 6,600 acres within Jefferson Memorial Forest (the nation's largest municipal urban forest). The expansive system includes 81 neighborhood parks, 29 community parks, 10 major urban parks, 14 community centers, 10 golf courses, six parkways, four greenways, the historic Iroquois Amphitheater, an Adapted and Inclusive (AIR) recreation center, the Mary T. Meagher Aquatic Center, three outdoor pools, two skateparks, five cemeteries, and two historic homes.

In 2022, Louisvillians identified parks, trails, and recreation among the top three factors that make our community a great place to live.

ORGANIZATION CHART



Louisville Parks and Recreation works hand-in-hand with many non-profit organizations. Louisville Parks and Recreation enjoys close partnerships with numerous other non-profits throughout the city and surrounding areas in addition to what's listed above.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

❧ **The Parks & Recreation Department** works with a lot of nonprofit groups which raise money for specific parks or programs that support the City.

❧ **The Parks Alliance** (also known as the Parks Foundation) just completed a report called Parks for All. The report includes all the data about the parks and recreations systems, a survey of the citizens about the Parks and Programs, a plan to improve the Parks & Recreation Services including addressing equity among all neighborhoods. This will provide a blueprint for the next Director to prioritize projects

❧ **The Olmsted Conservancy** raises money for the 18 Olmsted Parks and Parkways to provide funds in addition to the Parks & Recreation to maintain the Olmsted Parks at a higher level and to funds for capital improvements.

❧ **Waterfront Park** is a Private/Public Authority that developed parks along the Ohio River and they are fundraising for another 22 acres to the west of the existing park. Waterfront Park is a popular gathering spot for events, with plenty of scenic riverside green space for exploring. Visitors can walk across the visually stunning Big Four Bridge, ride the Belle of Louisville steamboat, visit the Lincoln Memorial, rent a bike, or take a Segway tour through the park. In addition, visitors may listen to a concert in the amphitheater and grab a bite from a food truck, then stroll along the Louisville Riverwalk and watch the sun set over the river. Waterfront Park welcomes close to 2 million visitors per year. Before becoming an 85-acre public park, the site was a wasteland of scrap yards and abandoned industrial buildings



❧ **The Parklands of Floyds Fork** is a private park that is open to the public, it was funded by Federal Funds, Grants, the City and major fundraising efforts that brought in \$80-90 million. The City provided land and the group known as 21 Century Parks purchased land, developed a design for all types of parks features such as a rental facility, bike paths, forests, trails, ball fields. The parklands will fundraise every year for the maintenance budget. It is 4000 acres and 20 miles long and has 55-65 employees

❧ **The Louisville Zoo** is a separate public/private facility near the Creason Park that is funded by entry fees, donors and the City of Louisville.

❧ **Wilderness Louisville** is another non-profit that supports the Jefferson Memorial Forest in Louisville. They provide funds for nature education programs which include for the schools, special hikes, map & compass programs, archery lessons, etc.

❧ **Trees Louisville** brings donors and volunteers together to plant community trees to improve the tree canopy and increase shade in the City. These trees are in addition to what the Parks & Recreation Department plants in their parks with their forestry unit.

❧ There are many more non-profits that work with Louisville Metro Parks & Recreation.

CHARACTERISTICS OF AN IDEAL CANDIDATE



Operational knowledge
Politically astute
Build trust
Open minded
Respectful
Provide constructive feedback
Professional image
Visibility
Creativity in managing finances
Accessible/approachable
Avoid micromanagement
Communication
Adaptable
Support accountability

Motivating
Innovative/Outside the box
Collaborative
Grant experience
Talent recruitment and retention
Project management
Calm and patient demeanor
Understanding of infrastructure projects
Honesty
Transparency
HR & labor relations experience
Social media aware
Advocate
Salesperson



HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR FLAGSHIP PARKS

This friendly Kentucky city's numerous parks (more than 120!) fill its unique neighborhoods with accessible greenspaces.

CHEROKEE PARK

Willow Avenue and Cherokee Parkway

Designed by Olmsted to be a place where one could experience scenery and take in the refreshment offered by the landscape. The park's main feature is a 3.9-kilometer scenic loop (with separate one-way lanes for cars and recreational traffic). Cherokee Park is comprised of 409 acres of pure natural beauty and sees about 500,000 visitors a year.

IROQUOIS PARK

Southern Parkway & Taylor Boulevard

The park is one of the largest public parks in Louisville at more than 725 acres. At the heart of the park is a 10,000-year-old forest that blankets the knob's steep hillsides with a great variety of rare plants and animals. In particular, the North Overlook within the park has treated generations of visitors to extraordinary views of the city of Louisville. A meandering wheelchair-accessible path leads park visitors to a high point with vistas of downtown Louisville and the Indiana Knobs. Additional amenities include a disc golf course, hiking and horseback riding trails, fishing, tennis, and more. Many residents and visitors attend events at the popular Iroquois Amphitheater. This accessible outdoor amphitheater seats approximately 2,348 people and hosts various arts and cultural programs. The Jack O'Lantern Spectacular has become the "must-see" event of the Halloween season (art gallery of more than 5,000 artistically carved pumpkins in themed settings).

SHAWNEE PARK

Southwestern Parkway & Broadway

The Olmsted plan for Shawnee used the low-lying riverfront setting and topog-



raphy of the land as inspiration for the park's design. The features of the park are the concourses that afford extensive views and the expansive Great Lawn. Shawnee Park is located on the banks of the Ohio River in the West Louisville neighborhood of Shawnee.

CENTRAL PARK

Fourth Street & Magnolia Avenue

The sixteen-acre Central Park in Old Louisville was purchased from the duPont family in 1904. It is characterized by elaborate walkways and border plantings. A small urban green space, Central Park is surrounded by the charming architecture of Old Louisville, a neighborhood with the largest collection of restored Victorian homes in the country. The C. Douglas Ramey Amphitheater, which hosts free summertime performances of Shakespeare in the Park.

SENECA PARK

Pee Wee Reese & Taylorsville Roads

The last of the parks designed in Louisville by the Olmsted firm. The plan included an 18-hole golf course along with many other recreation facilities. Encompassing more than 560 acres, Seneca Park includes baseball fields, cross country trails, horseback riding trails, picnic tables, a playground, and a 1.2-mile-long walking path. Seneca Park has 500,000 annual visitors.

MCNEELY LAKE PARK

Mount Washington

McNeely Lake Park, one of the largest in the Louisville Parks and Recreation system, features a scenic 46-acre fishing lake with an accessible pier and boat ramp owned by the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife. The Korean War Memorial, bridge trails and hiking trails are also in the park.



OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The Parks For All Action Plan, a comprehensive, long-term roadmap to build equity and excellence in Louisville's public park system which includes 120 parks, 14 community centers, pools, golf courses, greenways, parkways, and two historic homes. The 15-year initiative calls for gradually increasing park system funding to reach parity with the national average for comparably sized cities.

Louisville's public park system has been underfunded in terms of personnel and operating and capital resources. Long-term under-investment in the system has created a burdensome system-wide backlog in deferred maintenance and capital investment needs, visible in the physical conditions of parks and recreation facilities across Metro. Inconsistent annual funding for operating expenses and capital improvements presents a challenge for consistent service delivery and year-to-year planning. Park investments have been inequitably distributed, with many parks receiving insufficient ongoing maintenance and capital investments over the past 20 years. As a result, 55% of Metro parks are now in poor or fair condition.

To address this inequity, the Parks for All Action Plan was developed by the non-profit Parks Alliance of Louisville working with local leaders and nationally recognized park experts. Launched in August 2021, they analyzed the physical condition of every Metro Park and issues affecting people in surrounding neighborhoods, including poverty and crime rates, air quality, and health outcomes. Finally, they contracted for a city-wide poll to ask residents what they want from their parks.

The 900 respondents overwhelmingly said that quality, well-maintained parks are a top priority. Eighty-six percent want the city to invest more resources in parks, with most funds going to rehabilitating what we have, followed by better day-to-day maintenance, recreational programming, and capital investment in new designs and amenities.

In general terms, the main elements of the Parks for All Action Plan are:

- Work to dedicate more financial resources over time to deliver fundamental park and recreation services.
- Utilize data to allocate funds equitably. As a result of more investment in maintenance, rehabilitation, recreational programming, and capital projects, parks in all neighborhoods will see some degree of improvement, but substantial funding will flow first to parks that need it most.
- Restructure the Louisville Parks and Recreation Department's policies, practices, and operations to reflect national best practices, support equitable investments, and provide quality service delivery.
- Better utilize our network of community centers to deliver recreational programming with budgets distributed more equitably to provide greater resources to neighborhoods with greater needs.
- Over time, restructure the centers with expanded hours and staff to deliver more robust services. And because only one site was built to function as a recreational center, explore rehabbing or build new centers to fill gaps.
- Adopt a coordinated strategy among park non-profits to amplify impact. A consortium of the Parks Alliance, Olmsted Parks Conservancy, and Wilderness Louisville will be established to ensure shared goals and strong coordination with Louisville Metro Parks and Recreation.




In general terms, the main elements of the Parks for All Action Plan are:


Dedicate more financial resources over time to deliver fundamental park and recreation services; realizing Metro is limited in the ways it can raise funds.



DIRECTOR OF LOUISVILLE PARKS AND RECREATION

QUALIFICATIONS

 Masters or Bachelor's in Parks & Recreation Administration with over 8-10 years of experience in a diverse Parks & Recreation Department at the administrative level. Or knowledge, skills and education that demonstrate ability to provide leadership, management, and administration of Louisville Metro Parks & Recreation with 300 employees and 120 parks, etc. Professional Urban Parks experience a plus.

 Knowledge, skills and abilities should include: great communications skills, with all stakeholders and the employees, management and operation skills, leadership skills, labor relations knowledge, human resources experience, ability to find, secure, and implement grants, excellent project management skills, budgeting experience and the creativity in moving the department forward by building relationships with non-profits, council members and the community.

COMPENSATION AND APPLICATION PROCESS

This Mayor-appointed position has a very competitive salary for the role and expectations. An excellent benefits package will augment the salary. Contact Ms. Randi Frank or Mr. Robert Slavin for details on compensation and benefits.

LOUISVILLE METRO IS AN AA/EOE EMPLOYER

If you are interested in this exciting opportunity, or need additional details please contact Ms. Randi Frank or Mr. Robert Slavin at the address below. To apply now please submit your cover letter and resume to Ms. Frank and Mr. Slavin. Position will remain open until filled; first screening date is June 23, 2023. Top candidates will be asked to complete a questionnaire.

More information is available on our website and these other links:

louisvilleky.gov/government/parks

louisvilleky.gov/government/management-budget/fy24-budget

www.parksalliancelou.org/parks-for-all

ourwaterfront.org

olmstedparks.org

theparklands.org

wildernesslouisville.org

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