

Executive Director

BASIC FUNCTION

The Executive Director serves as the chief executive officer of Parks Tacoma, overseeing all aspects of the District's operations. Accountable to the Board of Park Commissioners, the Executive Director is responsible for leading the District's operations, advancing the Board's strategic direction, implementing Board policies, and ensuring the District fulfills its mission and statutory responsibilities while maintaining organizational effectiveness, financial sustainability, and public trust.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES

- Provide vision and strategic leadership in the development and implementation of the Board approved policies, mission, goals and objectives.
- Assist the Board in conducting District business in all matters and performs other duties and assumes responsibilities as the Board directs.
- Oversee districtwide operations and major departmental functions to ensure effective, efficient, and high-quality delivery of Parks Tacoma services; establish organizational goals, monitor performance, identify and address performance gaps, and ensure accountability across the organization.
- Provide strategic and in-depth financial leadership that aligns with organizational goals and ensures fiscal sustainability including long-term forecasting, maintaining appropriate reserves, identifying emerging financial risks, and ensuring timely corrective action when financial performance deviates from established plans.
- Provide the Board with timely, candid, accurate, and complete information regarding organizational performance, financial condition, significant risks, and emerging issues; implement Board-approved strategic priorities and ensure alignment of planning, policies, and performance measures across the organization.
- Establish and implement management policies and procedures, including human resources and financial standards, and articulate District philosophy, goals, and objectives to the Board, staff, and community.
- Represent Parks Tacoma in interactions with governmental agencies, educational institutions, community organizations, and public bodies; participate in meetings and deliver presentations to advance partnerships and resolve issues.
- Provide inclusive and effective leadership by setting clear expectations, fostering a culture of trust, candor, collaboration, and accountability, supporting staff development, involving employees in decision-making, and ensuring accountability for organizational outcomes.
- Oversee the development and progression of long- and short-term plans and capital improvement strategies to respond to evolving community needs, enhance existing services, and plan new programs and facilities; lead the organization to maintain strong financial sustainability, operational effectiveness, and service delivery.
- Perform other duties as assigned.

In the performance of their respective tasks and duties all employees are expected to conform to the following:

- Perform quality work within deadlines with or without direct supervision.
- Interact professionally with employees, customers and suppliers.
- Work effectively as a team contributor on all assignments.
- Work independently while understanding the necessity for communicating and coordinating work efforts with other employees and organizations.
- Observe applicable safety requirements, use safety equipment provided, implement appropriate safety practices at all times and report immediately any unsafe working conditions or hazards.
- Effectively manage budget, programs, and projects in alignment with core values and guidelines.
- Establish clear work plan expectations and provide direction in order to effectively lead.
- Encourage personal/professional growth by providing continuous feedback and developmental opportunities for staff.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

- 12 years of management experience in a public sector organization with at least 5 years in a senior management level position overseeing and supervising teams and operations, strategic planning, working directly with elected officials, and driving financial and community initiatives.
- Bachelor's degree in business administration, public administration, recreation and park administration or related field. Master's degree is preferred.
- Valid Washington driver's license with acceptable driving record.
- Preference will be given to those that possess a current Certified Park and Recreation Executive (CPRE) certification.

COMPETENCY REQUIREMENTS

Decision Making / Responsibility

- Provide strategic leadership with broad autonomy under the direction of the Board of Park Commissioners.
- Make high-stakes decisions where policies offer guiding principles but require sophisticated interpretation, risk assessment, and strategic judgment.
- Resolve highly complex, precedent-setting issues that influence District-wide operations, long-term sustainability, and public trust.
- Serve as the accountable leader for Parks Tacoma, responsible for organizational-wide outcomes, service delivery, and strategic performance.
- Ensure alignment between division decisions, organizational strategy, and governing body directives.

Budget Oversight

- Oversee the development of budgets, ensure long-term financial sustainability, and oversee resource allocation at a strategic level.
- Approve major expenditures and capital investments; monitor fiscal performance and promptly communicate significant variances, emerging financial risks, and recommended corrective actions to the Board and appropriate organizational leadership.
- Establish financial parameters, cost-reduction strategies, and revenue-enhancement approaches across multiple divisions.
- Integrate budget planning with organizational strategy, forecasting, and enterprise-level performance measures.

Leadership and People Management

- Build and champion an equitable, high-performing culture that reflects justice, equity, diversity, accessibility, and inclusion (JEDAI) across the organization.
- Lead Directors, Managers, and professional staff; ensure leadership continuity, succession planning, and competency development across the organization.
- Set strategic performance measures, ensure accountability through coaching, evaluation, and continuous feedback cycles.
- Address leadership or performance gaps that impact organizational success; lead corrective action at the managerial or director level when necessary.
- Oversee recruitment, selection, onboarding, and organizational integration for senior-level staff; ensure robust leadership development pipelines.
- Create systems that recognize innovation, collaboration, and exceptional performance across multiple operational units.
- Align workforce planning, talent development, and organizational strategy to support District-wide goals.

Program Management

- Provide enterprise-level strategic oversight of complex, multi-disciplinary programs that significantly impact District operations.
- Assess staff and managerial recommendations to determine direction, priorities, and large-scale program strategies.
- Lead organizational initiatives that require broad collaboration, cross-functional integration, and multi-year planning.
- Ensure the organization operates in full compliance with federal, state, and local regulations, while advancing mission-driven outcomes and long-term sustainability.
- Promote a culture of innovation, data-informed decision-making, and continuous improvement across the organization.
- Implement policies and best practices that elevate operational excellence and organizational resilience.

- Represent the District at high-level professional forums, strategic partnerships, and intergovernmental initiatives to strengthen collaboration, influence policy discussions, and expand cooperative opportunities.
- Lead a systematic hazard identification process across all parks, facilities, and programs, ensuring compliance with safety regulations, mitigating risks to staff and visitors, and integrating hazard data into operational planning and budgeting.

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

Knowledge

- Advanced understanding of federal, state, and local regulatory frameworks affecting multi-division operations.
- Complex organizational systems, governance structures, and public sector accountability standards.
- Enterprise-level budgeting, financial management, forecasting, and capital planning.
- Strategic planning, organizational development, change management, and performance management frameworks.
- Community relations, public engagement strategies, and stakeholder partnership development.
- High-level program evaluation, compliance auditing, and risk management methodologies.
- Emerging trends, best practices, and innovations relevant to public agencies, operational efficiency, and service delivery.

Skills

- Anticipating organizational needs and designing long-term strategic solutions.
- Leading cross-functional and cross-divisional teams to achieve complex, strategic outcomes.
- Synthesizing large volumes of data to inform high-impact decision-making.
- Communicating with governing boards, executive leaders, public officials, and diverse community groups with clarity and authority.
- Overseeing and improving enterprise-wide policies, processes, and systems.
- Negotiating significant contracts, partnerships, and multi-agency agreements.
- Preparing high-level reports, strategic plans, policy recommendations, and presentations for executive or governing bodies.
- Leveraging technology, analytics, and performance metrics to drive continuous improvement.
- Managing large-scale projects, change initiatives, and organizational transformation.

Abilities

- Think strategically and systemically, connecting organizational goals to enterprise-wide mission and long-range plans.
- Provide visionary leadership that inspires staff, advances innovation, and strengthens organizational culture.
- Represent the District effectively with policymakers, partner organizations, and key stakeholders.

- Navigate ambiguity, competing priorities, and complex political or organizational environments with sound judgment.
- Build and sustain collaborative relationships across departments, agencies, and community partners.
- Anticipate emerging issues, mitigate risks, and maintain operational stability through proactive leadership.
- Uphold transparency, accountability, ethical conduct, and public service values in all decisions.
- Manage multiple enterprise-level initiatives simultaneously while meeting critical deadlines.
- Ensure a safe, inclusive, and high-performing work environment through effective leadership practices.
- Interpret and analyze systemic challenges, develop scalable solutions, and implement improvements across the organization.

ENVIRONMENT:

Predominantly Office environment.

Driving a vehicle to conduct work.

PHYSICAL ABILITIES:

Hearing and speaking to exchange information and provide work direction to others.

Seeing to monitor Park District activities and operations.

Note: accommodations may be facilitated upon review and approval.

HAZARDS:

Working in a variety of locations and environments when reviewing programs and spaces.

Working with customers or community members who may be sometimes upset or frustrated.