



City of Santa Maria

Invites Applicants for

DIRECTOR OF RECREATION AND PARKS



RECREATION AND PARKS DEPARTMENT

The Recreation and Parks Department's mission is to enrich the lives of the residents of Santa Maria through quality recreation programs and services; and to provide safe and well-maintained facilities and parks, while anticipating the changing needs of the community.

The department operates 234 acres of developed parkland in 33 neighborhood and community parks, part of the 1,774-acre [Los Flores Ranch Park](#) property, the Abel Maldonado Community Youth Center, the Hagerman Softball Complex, Paul Nelson Aquatics Center, Elwin Mussell Senior Center, Veterans' Memorial Center and other community centers. The department provides programs in aquatics, youth and adult sports, therapeutics and senior services, Special Olympics, community classes and events, youth and teen programs, and the [Mayor's Task Force on Youth Safety](#). Parks are patrolled by the [Park Services Officers/City Rangers](#). The Department also runs the [City's Urban Forest Program](#).

The Recreation and Parks is supported by a management team consisting of an Assistant Director, a Recreation Manager, and a Business Manager. Each manager directs the daily operations and activities of their respective assignments. The division is staffed by 94 dedicated recreation and parks professionals.

The Recreation & Parks Department's 2025-26 budget totals \$31.7 million, inclusive of \$6.8 million of new capital projects. Many other projects are still in progress, including the new Santa Maria Sports Complex.



RECREATION & PARKS DIRECTOR POSITION OVERVIEW

Responsible for the daily operations and management of the Recreation and Parks Department. Provide staff support to the City Manager's Office, City Council and Recreation and Parks Commission. Supervise a staff of full-time and permanent part-time, assigned to 5 major divisions: Parks, Landscape Districts, Urban Forest, Recreation, and Administration. Services are provided in the following areas: city parks (225+ acres), part of Los Flores Ranch Park, publicly managed trees (30,000+), street medians, storm basins and rights-of-way (45+ acres), Santa Maria Town Center landscaping and parking structures, 7 major recreation facilities offering specialty recreation classes and programs and support to community based recreation programs i.e., youth basketball, youth soccer, etc.

Mission Statement

To enrich the lives of the residents of Santa Maria and surrounding areas through the provision of quality recreation and park facilities, programs and services, while being intuitive and responsive to the leisure needs of our customers.



THE SANTA MARIA COMMUNITY

The City of Santa Maria is located on the beautiful central coast of California, between Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo. Santa Maria has been recognized nationally as an All-America City by the National Civic League and offers reasonably priced housing, community festivals, quality schools, and is in close proximity to beaches, cultural arts, a local airport, wineries, and higher education institutions.

The City is comprised of 23 square miles. It is a growing and developing community known for its agriculture, affordable living, and local and regional employment and recreation, with 33 City parks.

As the largest city in the County of Santa Barbara, conveniently adjacent to U.S. Highway 101, Santa Maria has a diverse population of approximately 112,000 residents (median age of 29) and is a regional hub of commerce, industry, farming, and housing. The City has a harmonious balance of maintaining coastal and agricultural lands while promoting business.

The City is rapidly attracting new residents, businesses and visitors, and downtown revitalization is underway.



CITY GOVERNMENT

Santa Maria is managed by the Council/City Manager form of government. City government services are provided by ten departments: City Manager's Office, City Attorney's Office, Community Development, Finance, Fire, Library, Police, Public Works, Recreation and Parks and Utilities. Santa Maria has over 700 full-time equivalent employees and a 2025-26 budget of \$4300.5 million, inclusive of an exciting and aggressive Capital Improvement Program. The City has five bargaining units. The five-member City Council is elected by district except the Mayor, who is elected at-



THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The ideal candidate is a seasoned professional with a strong background in municipal recreation, parks management, and community engagement. They are passionate about enriching lives through safe, inclusive, and innovative programs, as well as maintaining high-quality parks and facilities. The selected candidate as the next Recreation and Parks Director will possess the following competencies of **Strategic Leader**:

Incumbents should have a solid foundation of Individual Contributor, Front-line Supervisor and Middle Manager core competencies identified by the organization, as well as the following core competencies identified as essential for Strategic Leader (click the hyper link to see the full definition [Strategic Leader Competencies](#)):

- **Mission Focus** - Effective performers understand and support the organization's mission, believe in it, value it, and are committed to it.
- **Visioning** - Effective performers are imaginative, able to create a vision of a preferred future, and communicate it clearly and enthusiastically to others.
- **Strategic Thinking** - Effective performers act with the future in mind, understand the factors influencing strategy (e.g., core competence, community needs, and the organization's current strengths and limitations), and consider future impact when weighing decisions.
- **Business Thinking** - Effective performers see the organization as a series of integrated and interlocking business processes, understand general business concepts that govern these systems, and understand how change impacts the entire organization.
- **Diplomacy** - Effective performers work well within the organization's power network. They recognize personal agendas, balance internal politics, work well with elected officials and navigate the political environment effectively.
- **Global Mindset** - Effective performers see their city role in a larger context within the community, region and beyond. They value diversity and other points of view, identify partnership opportunities and exhibit coalition-building skills.
- **Risk Taking** - Effective performers have a history of, and propensity for, taking calculated chances to achieve goals. When they fail, they accept it, learn from it, and move on.
- **Leadership Identification** - Effective performers identify with the role of leader, and enjoy positions of responsibility and authority.

- **Presentation Skills** - Effective performers are comfortable and confident in front of an audience, deliver messages effectively to inform or persuade, and are adept at public engagement.

In summary, qualified candidates will excel in providing executive leadership and guidance.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The new Recreation and Parks Director will need to address a number of opportunities and challenges that will require inspired leadership, diplomacy, collaboration, and creative problem-solving.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT VIST:

[Recreation and Parks Department Website](#)



Download the [OuterSpatial](#) Mobile App
and bookmark Los Flores Ranch Park!

📍 Use the interactive map to navigate through trails

📍 Stay up-to-date on events at the Ranch

📍 Check for trail updates or temporary trail closures

For iOS • Android app coming soon!

EXPERIENCE AND EDUCATION

Education: A typical way of obtaining the knowledge, skills and abilities outlined above is a Bachelor's degree in recreation or park administration, public administration, business organizational development or related field is desired, preferably supplemented by training and certifications.

Experience: Eight or more years of progressively responsible experience, involving the development and administration of comprehensive parks, recreation and community services. Five or more years of experience in a managerial or supervisory capacity.

REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF QUALIFICATIONS

The City of Santa Maria will give consideration to all qualified candidates who apply and demonstrate executive level experience in an organization of similar relative complexities.

The review and evaluation of qualifications will be at the discretion of the City, based on the most appropriate combination of experience and education that provides the knowledge, skills, and abilities required.

THE SELECTION PROCESS

To be considered, candidates must submit a compelling cover letter, resume and application via our applicant tracking system at: [City of Santa Maria Employment Opportunities](#). Candidates are strongly encouraged to apply early in the process for optimal consideration. **The closing date for this position is Friday, March 6, 2026, at 5:00 p.m..**

The City will conduct the initial evaluation of submitted materials to determine the best overall match with the established criteria as outlined in this recruitment profile. The selection process may also involve a supplemental questionnaire. Only a select group of highly qualified candidates will be invited to interview. It is anticipated that the new Recreation and Parks Director will join the City in early-Spring, or at a mutually agreeable date.

Should you have any questions regarding this position or the recruitment process, contact Graciela Reynoso, Chief Human Resources Officer at greynoso@cityofsantamaria.org.

- Confidential inquiries are welcomed -



COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

The successful candidate will be offered a very competitive salary with an outstanding benefits package.

The hiring range is expected to be : \$214,712 - \$240,492

Benefits include:

- **Retirement** – Participation in the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS)
- **Health Insurance** – Insurance includes medical, dental, and vision benefits available. Under the CalPERS Health Program, the City currently offers 100% employer-paid premium coverage for the CalPERS Gold health plan for employees and their families, with no out-of-pocket premium cost to employees.
- **Vacation** – The City offers a competitive vacation program with accrual rates increasing based on years of service, ranging from 10 to 21 days annually.
- **Management Leave** – 80 hours per year, credited each new payroll calendar year on January 1 (pro-rated to the nearest half-hour).
- **Sick Leave** – Accrued at the rate of 3.96 hours per pay period (approximately 96 hours annually).
- **Holidays** – 7 paid holidays per calendar year, plus 6 additional floating holiday days (48 hours) provided during the first pay period of the payroll calendar year (pro-rated).