



Recruiting for Parks & Recreation

Director

City of Dalton, GA





Dalton is located just off Interstate 75 in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains in northwest Georgia. Dalton is the second-largest city in northwest Georgia and only 85 miles north of Atlanta and 25 miles south of Chattanooga, Tennessee. The rolling hills near Dalton give way to farm communities in one direction and steep, curving passes in another. Alp-like inclinations of the region's mountain ranges make it a popular spot for cyclists.



Dalton continues to benefit economically from the floor-covering industry's production of carpet, rugs, and luxury vinyl flooring. Two of the worlds largest flooring manufacturers are located in Dalton. Small businesses and Fortune 500 companies call Dalton home because it offers world-class infrastructure, a ready work-force that embraces manufacturing, and a multi-cultural population that makes the City of Dalton a great place to live, work, and play.



The local terrain also features waterfalls, astounding views, and boasts the beauty of all four seasons. Within the North Georgia Region there is an abundance of outdoor activities that include hiking, biking, horseback riding, kayaking, fishing, rock climbing, boating and white-water rafting. The City of Dalton and Whitfield County also have an extensive recreational system that includes parks, playgrounds, golf course, ball fields, tennis courts, soccer fields and many other recreation amenities.



Dalton's newest park is the beautiful Haig Mill Lake Park which was financed with 2015 SPLOST funds. The park surrounds Haig Mill Lake, which is a drinking reservoir for the community, and offers amenities such as kayak rentals, catch and release fishing, hiking-jogging trail, playground, and picnic pavilions.

About the Government

The City of Dalton is a full-service municipality that operates under a Council/Administrator form of government. The Mayor and Council is an elected five-member body that sets policies, enacts ordinances, approves appropriations and develops the overall vision for the community, which is then carried out under the City Administrator's direction. The Parks and Recreation Director reports to the City Administrator and as a member of the Administrator's management team is responsible for the daily operations of the Parks and Recreation Department. The Director also works closely with the five-member Recreation Commission appointed by the Mayor and Council.



The Parks and Recreation Department has 41 full-time employees and 200 part-time/seasonal employees with an annual operating budget of \$3.5 Million, approximately \$300,000 Capital budget and a SPLOST multi-year budget of \$11.5 Million to include a soccer complex project that is currently out for bids.

DPRD Mission Statement:

Dalton Parks and Recreation is a dedicated team of professionals committed to enriching the quality of life of the citizens we serve by providing safe and accessible recreational opportunities and facilities for thousands of families throughout the City of Dalton and Whitfield County.

About the Position:

The following duties are normal for this position. They are not to be construed as exclusive or all-inclusive. Other duties may be required and assigned:

- Administers all programs, operations and facilities of the Parks and Recreation Department.
- Directs the planning, design, financing, construction, and maintenance of all park and recreation facilities.
- Directs short- and long-range plans for the department in all areas of programs and operations.
- Prepares and administers the annual department budget; monitors expenditures under the existing budget.
- Hires, trains, evaluate, counsels and disciplines subordinate staff.
- Inspects and directs management of all city parks, recreation centers, a senior center, and a golf course.
- Engages in professional development activities and encourages subordinate staff to do likewise.
- Serves as liaison between staff of the Recreation Commission; attends and makes presentation at monthly meetings of Commission.
- Serves on advisory boards of a number of community organizations.
- Provides consultative advice upon request to cities, counties, and other groups regarding recreation programs, operations, and facilities.
- Serves as an officer and/or member of various professional organizations and boards.



The Ideal Candidate

The City of Dalton is seeking an energetic and passionate leader to serve as their next Parks and Recreation Director. The successful individual must be a strong and visionary leader who is team-oriented, possesses exceptional communication skills, and utilizes a management style that supports mutual trust and openness among community stakeholders and City/County Government Officials. The successful candidate will have knowledge and experience in the management of a parks and recreation department, providing a high level of community engagement and innovative and creative delivery of recreation programs, services and activities to the community. The successful candidate will be expected to articulate a vision of excellence, establish credibility and consistency in delivery of services, motivate others within the Recreation Department and provide creative problem solving in response to community issues. Exceptional interpersonal skills are critical in this role.

Candidate Qualifications



- Bachelor's degree required in recreation administration, parks management, public administration, business administration or related degree from an accredited college or university;
- Minimum of five years of progressively responsible experience managing parks and recreation programs or complex multi-generational sports programs, and staff and resources supporting the programs; or any equivalent combination of education, training, and experience.
- Certification as a Park & Recreation Professional by the National Recreation & Parks Association, pool or aquatics certification or related professional certifications will be favorably considered during the vetting process;
- Must possess or obtain a Georgia Driver's License within 60 days of accepting the position.

Challenges & Opportunities:

The new Parks and Recreation Director will be expected to work with local officials and stakeholders to provide leadership to the following:

- Develop and articulate a vision for the Recreation Department that builds on the award-winning history of the Department while promoting new innovative best practices for providing leisure services for changing community needs. Examples of areas the vision should focus upon are:
 - Creating a culture of change within the Department that builds positive community perceptions about the department and moves the Department to a new level of service excellence.
 - Promoting the value of quality customer service that seeks to serve all social economic levels and ethnic segments of the community with innovative and specialized programs.
 - Continuing to improve the hallmark programs of the department, i.e. soccer program and other youth sports, while promoting the value of passive services and participation in lifelong leisure activities such as trails/greenways, park amenities, golf, and inclusive programs for groups with special needs and older citizens. Providing clinics, camps, and other instructional opportunities to encourage these nontraditional recreational programs.
- Develop a more robust communication program that gathers community feedback to determine support for services offered, provides a platform for suggested changes, and effectively tells the story of the Department's successes and innovations. Enhance the use of multiple communication tools, such as social media and an interactive website, to inform users of upcoming events, encourage online registrations, announce schedule changes, and to create a sense of program ownership by the community.

Challenges & Opportunities Continued:

- Evaluate and implement best practices for maintenance of Department facilities, grounds, and other capital assets. Special attentions should be given to the John Davis Center that serves as major point of contact for the public seeking recreation services and workspace for many Department employees. This ageing facility has SPLOST funding allocated that needs to be directed toward immediately renovating this important asset. Attention also must be given to developing a proactive maintenance plan that ensures clean, safe, and inviting playgrounds, tennis courts, playing fields, pickleball courts, and basketball courts along with support facilities for these functions. A capital improvement plan to address ongoing maintenance needs and identify appropriate funding must be developed.
- Evaluate the operating structure of the Department to determine if reorganization is needed to better serve the community and elevate the Department to a higher level of service delivery. This evaluation should include an assessment of skillsets of all current employees to determine if additional training is needed or reassignment of duties. A succession plan should be developed to provide an opportunity for employees to prepare themselves for assuming more complex positions when they become available. Important outcomes of this evaluation must include greater accountability among current staff and enhanced morale.
- Work cooperatively and professionally with the City leadership which includes the Mayor and Council, City Administrator, City Department Heads, and Recreation Commission. The Director must develop a working relationship that provides accurate and timely information concerning Department issues, needs, and challenges. An area that needs special attention will be working with City leadership and the Recreation Commission to assess issues recently identified in the ReConnect study to determine if the Department's service delivery model needs to change to create a more effective working relationship with community partners such as the Whitfield County government, school system, and recreation/sports stakeholder groups.
- Function as the project manager to commence or complete several major facility projects including the approximately \$20 million Aquatics Center project and SPLOST projects designed to improve soccer facilities and the trail/greenway system.

Compensation & Benefits:

The expected starting salary range for this position is **\$95,000 – 115,000** (depending on qualifications of the selected candidate), with a comprehensive benefits package, including health, dental and vision insurance options, retirement plan and a generous leave package. Relocation expenses are negotiable.

How To Apply:

Interested candidates must submit by email a cover letter, resume, at least five job related references and salary history **no later than October 22, 2021**: **Lisa Ward, Senior Associate, Mercer Group Associates**, at **lisaward912@gmail.com**. Any questions please call 706-983-9326. Interviews are expected to be conducted the last week of November.



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