
KENNETH ALLEN

Director, Houston Parks and Recreation Department
2999 South Wayside | Houston, Texas 77023



Kenneth Allen serves as Director of the City of Houston Parks and Recreation Department, a role he assumed on September 1, 2021. A Houston native, Director Allen brings over 38 years of professional experience in the parks and recreation field. He is a graduate of Houston Madison High School and Indiana University, with additional studies at Clemson University. Prior to his appointment, Director Allen had devoted an impressive 33 years to the Houston Parks and Recreation Department, with 11 of those years serving as Assistant Director of Recreation and Wellness.

As the department director, Director Allen is entrusted with the comprehensive stewardship of the City's parklands, urban forests, and greenspaces, alongside the management of park facilities, recreational programs and activities. He also oversees the department's budget and a dedicated team of approximately 700 full-time and seasonal employees.

Director Allen ensures the department operates with efficiency and vision, fostering ongoing growth and success. Drawing on his extensive industry experience, his leadership has been instrumental in securing reaccreditation from the National Recreation and Park Association's Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) in October 2024, a testament to his commitment to excellence

Since his appointment, Director Allen has leveraged his diverse experience and passion for parks to enhance all aspects of the department's operations. He is committed to maintaining safe, inviting greenspaces and providing high-quality recreational programs for Houstonian of all ages and abilities. With a strong track record of building community programs and securing funding through partnerships, sponsorships, and grants, Director Allen prioritizes customer service, responsive government, and the preservation of parkland for future generations.

Director Allen is renowned for his expertise in forging strategic partnerships and advocating for park funding. His notable achievements include collaborating with organizations such as the Houston Astros and Astros Golf Foundation, Memorial Park Conservancy, Hermann Park Conservancy, Buffalo Bayou Partnership, Emancipation Park Conservancy and the Houston Parks Board on transformative park projects that elevate the quality of life for all Houstonians.

Under Director Allen's leadership, HPARD has prioritized revitalizing the City's neighborhood parks. His vision is to transform each park into a community hub offering both passive and active recreation. In 2023, HPARD and partners revitalized 30 neighborhood parks, with a second campaign underway to enhance 25 more of the city's most highly used parks.

Director Allen has played a crucial role in supporting the Office of Emergency Management during disasters, leading the department's efforts in responding to emergencies. His leadership has been essential in coordinating the distribution of water, mobilizing resources, assisting citizens around the clock, and establishing warming and cooling centers for the public. His proactive involvement ensures the department is prepared to provide immediate and critical support in times of crisis.

Director Allen is a member of several professional organizations, including the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), Texas Recreation and Parks Society (TRAPS), the Greater Gulf Coast Parks and Recreation Director's Association, the Heritage Society, Hermann Park Conservancy, Memorial Park Conservancy, Buffalo Bayou Partnership, and the Houston Parks Board.