

# CITY ADMINISTRATOR OZARK, MISSOURI



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## OZARK, MISSOURI



### THE POSITION IN BRIEF

The City Administrator is Ozark's chief administrative officer in charge of the city's day-to-day operations and manages a budget of approximately \$30 million. The City Administrator works closely on development efforts, including maintaining a close working relationship with the city's business community. The City Administrator reports to the Mayor and Board of Aldermen and oversees a workforce of more than 125 full-time employees.

### THE CITY

Strategically located between Springfield and Branson along U.S. Highway 65, Ozark's location in this rapidly growing area makes the community a highly desirable place to live, work and play.

Founded in 1841, Ozark was named after the Ozark Mountains, which rise nearby. After the Civil War, Ozark became a center of agricultural trade, with businesses and industries sprouting up to serve local farmers. By the late 1800s, Ozark had become a bustling hub of commerce, with a courthouse, a newspaper, and several hotels, saloons, and stores lining the town's streets. In the early 1900s, the town's economy shifted from agriculture to manufacturing, with several factories opening to produce goods like shoes, clothing, and furniture.

Ozark also became a popular tourist destination, with visitors drawn to the town's beautiful scenery, recreational opportunities, and cultural events. The city was incorporated in 1857.

Today, [Ozark](#) has grown from this small agricultural community to one that has been experiencing a boom in growth and development. As the seat of Christian County, Ozark's Courthouse Square Historic District is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and the focal point of a lively downtown. Ozark's top-notch municipal services and high-ranking school district are known throughout the region. Ozark maintains a small-town atmosphere and high quality of life with its livability and family-friendliness.

## THE ORGANIZATION

The City of Ozark operates under a Mayor – Board of Aldermen – City Administrator form of government. The City has six aldermen and a Mayor. The City is divided into three wards, each represented by two aldermen. Aldermen are elected by the residents of a district every two years.

The Mayor presides over the aldermen, representing the people on a city level. A number of the elected officials have been on the board more than two terms. Together, the [Mayor](#) and [Board of Aldermen](#) appoint the City Administrator. The Mayor and Board's work is enhanced by a number of voluntary and advisory boards and commissions. The last City Administrator recently took a job with the City of Springfield after serving Ozark for more than 20 years.

Ozark is a full-service municipality including Police, Public Works including a wastewater treatment and sanitary sewer system, Water Utility, Parks and Recreation, Planning and Development, and administrative services including administration, city clerk, finance, attorney, municipal court, communications, and human resources. The city has a workforce of more than 125 full-time employees, plus additional part-time and seasonal employees.

The City Administrator is chief administrative officer in charge of the City's day-to-day operations and oversees a [budget](#) of approximately \$30 million, all funds included. The City is in excellent financial condition with an unassigned fund balance of more than 75%. The City Administrator works closely on development efforts, including maintaining a close working relationship with the City's business community.

## A SNAPSHOT OF OZARK'S DEMOGRAPHICS AND AMENITIES:

Average age of **34** years old

Population racial background – White: **90.8%**; Two or more races: **5.55%**; Black or African American: **1.59**

Median household income: **\$66,631**

Median value of an Ozark home: **\$216,000**

Land area of **12** square miles

**Low** crime rate

Exceptional **schools** offered through the [Ozark School District](#).

An abundant supply of inexpensive **water, energy, and sewage** treatment capacity.

City-operated **parks and recreational facilities**, including:

- The **Ozark Community Center**, or "The OC," is a bustling community center with a gymnasium, leisure pool, fitness center, and other facilities.
- Other park and trail amenities, including the **Chadwick Flyer bike/ped trail system** and [Finley River Park](#) which offers water recreation options and park pavilions available for rent.
- [Neil Grubaugh Park](#) offers an inclusive playground, outdoor aquatic center, and disc golf.

Nearby award-winning **health care**.

Distinguished **institutions of higher learning** nearby including, among others, [Missouri State University](#) and [Drury University](#).





## EXPECTATIONS AND PROJECTS

**Growth and Growth Management.** In the last several decades, Ozark has experienced explosive population and development growth. For instance, in the last 30 years the city's population has more than quintupled. Since 2010, the population has increased by more than 20%. Commercial, retail and housing developments have followed. Geographically, Ozark sits in a strategic point along the U.S. 65 corridor, almost equidistance between Springfield and Branson, an additional factor contributing to Ozark's appeal.

Population growth and significant economic development is the City's strength, its opportunity, and its challenge. The city's recent strategic plan highlights many of the city's strengths such as its proximity to natural resources and outdoor recreation opportunities, as well as the city's historic districts and residents' belief that the community is a clean and safe place to live. Yet, it is those very assets, some worry, which could be threatened if the city's growth strategies are not sustainable, balanced, and accountable to growth's impacts on the city's finances, public safety, and quality of life.

The City's new strategic plan recognizes this area of focus, saying the city's objectives regarding economic development and land use need to "balance growth with sustainability, ensuring that Ozark's development is both economically beneficial and respectful of [the City's] unique character and values." The next City Administrator can expect to take on a significant role in helping guide the City's growth challenges, assuring that all interests – both advocates and questioners – are respected, communicated with, and engaged.

**Planning Guides.** In early 2024 City officials adopted a new [strategic plan](#), updating efforts last done in 2016. The process undertaken in fall of 2023 engaged both elected officials and staff leaders. The plan resulted in a 10-year vision, a series of three-year priorities and five areas of focus. Those areas of focus included: Financial Stability, Public Safety, Civic Engagement, Economic Development and Land Use, and Natural Resources and Access the Outdoors.

The City has also undertaken other planning guides including a master parks and recreation plan, a retail marketing analysis and a residential market analysis. Recently, too, the city has decided to undertake corridor studies to understand the traffic impact and economic development potential for major thoroughfares that wind through the city. Those studies include the [Central Corridor Traffic Study](#), and the [South Street Commercial Corridor Traffic Study](#).

Additionally, the City's [comprehensive plan](#) has been undated several times, most recently in 2019. These efforts provide the next City Administrator with a significant understanding – and roadmap – of where to focus his/her work efforts.

**Team Management.** The new City Administrator joins a management team whose tenure with the city varies. Some are seasoned, long-tenured employees while other department leaders are new to their position and the organization. The next City Administrator will find a team of professionals eager for a leader that is collaborative, fair-minded, evenhanded, and communicative. Steady, mature and professional leadership is desired by the Board of Aldermen and the management team. In addition, an ability to develop a big-picture view of the organization and community, while also being fluent about operational details, will be valuable for success in the position.

The next City Administrator also has a chance to recruit and add to the management team. As a result of personnel leaving the organization for promotional opportunities or family moves, there are vacancies in the Assistant City Administrator and the Human Resources Director positions. At present, the management team is pitching in to manage the duties that these positions handle in order to afford the new Administrator to have a hand in these hirings.

Growth in the city has fueled pressures on staffing levels and city facilities. These stresses can be felt throughout the organization, to be sure, but perhaps most acutely in the police department. As noted in the strategic plan, Ozark is recognized for its strong sense of safety and well-kept public spaces. "Ozark is a community where public safety is paramount." With



this in mind, focusing on the resources needed to ensure that the public's peace of mind and well-being will be additionally important for the next City Administrator.

**Financial Stability.** The City is in excellent financial condition with an unassigned fund balance of more than 75%. Still, growing the City's revenue and maintaining financial stability is vital as the city seeks to address the challenges growth bears on infrastructure, staffing and programming. Renewed efforts to seek community approval of a use tax may be revisited (previous referendums have failed), yet in the eyes of a fiscally conservative community – clear, credible, and forthright reasoning will need to be crafted. That challenge will rest in the hands of the next City Administrator.

### **Civic Engagement and Community Relations.**

The next City Administrator should be comfortable having a visible and embedded role in the City and the organization, easily interacting with, and embracing a wide spectrum of residents, individuals, community businesses and organizations. It is imperative that the new City Administrator be respectful of a diversity of opinions, one who seeks to elevate the community's engagement with, as well as trust and faith in, City government. Along these lines, the next City Administrator is encouraged to work with the City's team to creatively enhance the level and types of communication the City had with its residents and the business community.

**Intergovernmental Relations.** The City's desire for strong intergovernmental relationships within the region is keenly important. The next City Administrator can expect to play a leading role in developing and cultivating close working alliances with state, county and municipal partners and neighbors.

## THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

### Must Haves –

- A bachelor's degree in public administration or related field; a master's degree in public administration or closely related field is preferred.
- Five – seven years of increasingly responsible local government management experience.
- Proven leadership, managerial, and people skills.
- Experience working on issues related to residential and commercial development and growth.
- A collaborative, strategic-thinking approach toward staff leadership, human resources skills and supervisory experience.
- Effective communication, listening and collaboration skills.
- Financial, analytical, and budget management skills to lead a financially fit organization.
- A team-oriented, strategic-thinking approach toward staff leadership; human resources skills and supervisory experience are essential.
- Excellent communication skills and significant career success in building collaborative, effective relationships across departments.



### Management Style and Traits –

- Be an articulate and effective communicator, both orally and in writing; someone who is comfortable listening to and talking with a wide spectrum of people; someone who can clearly and concisely present written and oral information to decision makers.
- Have a history of regularly communicating with elected officials, keeping them abreast of city matters and developing issues.
- Be a strong leader able to successfully facilitate and assist staff to identify, analyze, prioritize, and thoroughly deliberate and address administrative and management issues which are critical toward meeting both current and longer-range needs of the overall community.
- Be one that can quickly assess the capabilities of staff, especially newer department heads, by providing them the guidance they need to succeed and the encouragement to look at their newly inherited operations with a critical eye.
- Possess the ability to let City staff carry out their duties and grow professionally, understanding that the occasional misstep will happen and using these occasions to help the employee grow and thrive as part of the team.
- Be a self-starter who has the vitality and energy to motivate and lead others.
- Possess well developed organizational skills and have the ability to balance numerous projects and issues while keeping on task. Know when to drill into the details and critically assess issues without losing sight of the city's bigger, strategic direction.
- Be a "people person," sincerely personable, patient, and accessible, and one who can relate with all persons in the community.
- Promote a strong, service-oriented, "customer relations" approach by all municipal employees in dealing with citizenry.
- Have complete personal and professional integrity, gaining respect and inspiring the trust and confidence of subordinates, co-workers, and elected and appointed officials, as well as the general public.

## COMPENSATION, BENEFITS AND THE ORGANIZATION'S CULTURE

The starting salary is \$150,000 – \$174,000 +/- DOQ, plus an excellent benefit package. The city is part of the Missouri LAGERs retirement program.

The organization prides itself on its commitment to customer service and teamwork. Staff has a lot of daily interaction with one another and report strong interdepartmental relations. The city's organization is lean and city staff possesses a high-output work ethic.

The Mayor and Board of Aldermen possess a strong respect for City staff's work. Among themselves, elected officials are collegial and respectful of differing perspectives and points of view.

## HOW TO APPLY

Candidates should apply by April 8, 2024 with resume, cover letter and contact information for five work-related references to [www.GovHRjobs.com](http://www.GovHRjobs.com) to the attention of Lee Szymborski, Senior Vice President, GovHR USA/ MGT Consulting, 630 Dundee Road, Suite #225, Northbrook, IL 60062. Tel: 847-380-3240. The City is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

