



— POSITION AVAILABLE —

CITY MANAGER

Apply ASAP but no later than February 7, 2025

Welcome to the City of Sarasota, Florida, known by many as “Paradise.” Tucked away on the Gulf Coast along peninsular Florida, Sarasota is positioned 60 miles south of Tampa and 80 miles north of Fort Myers. Step into nirvana as you enjoy scenic white beaches, stunning golf courses, and dive into the past while entranced by beautifully preserved pieces of history. Sarasota is a popular “winter getaway” for Northern tourists, making it a beloved destination for visitors, residents, and retirees alike. The City’s natural beauty and amenities provide a little bit of everything for everyone.

Historically lauded as a major fishing destination centuries before its initial incorporation in 1902, Sarasota offers diverse fishing opportunities. Deep-sea fishers can hunt for grouper, snapper, and amberjack, while shoreline fishers can catch redfish, trout, and snook. One of the best ways to experience the area’s abundant fishing possibilities is to simply fish from the beach.

Sarasota is also renowned for its picturesque local keys, which are small, sandy islands, like Lido Key and Siesta Key. Sunbathing and walking along the area’s soft, powdery white sand are compared to Elysian Fields by locals and tourists. Whether relaxing with a book



against the backdrop of the water or renting beach equipment, you can easily feel rejuvenated by Sarasota's 251 days of sun.

Those who desire to connect with the area's marine wildlife can visit the nearby Mote Marine Laboratory and Aquarium to observe otters, stingrays, sharks, dolphins, and other sea life. Mote Marine works with Sarasota Bay Explorers to offer interactive eco-tour boat rides.

Another remarkable destination is the Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, which has been ranked as one of the top 100 "World's Greatest Places of 2024" by *TIME* magazine. As the world's first net-positive-energy botanical complex, the Gardens are a 45-acre open-air expanse displaying an extensive collection of orchids, gesneriads, ferns, and banyan groves. The Gardens offer a chance for visitors to reconnect with nature and explore the region's history.

For some recreation, head onto Legacy Trail, an 18.5-mile paved multi-use trail that connects Sarasota southward to Venice's Historic Train Depot. Both riders and pedestrians can travel safely along the pathway and explore additional trailheads near Nokomis Riverview Park. The Legacy Trail also intersects with the City's gem, Payne Park. This 60-acre recreational area is considered the City's central park with its circus-themed playground, pedestrian track, Disc Golf course, and open space picnic and park areas.

No visit is complete without a little tee time. Sarasota's first mayor, John Hamilton Gillespie, built the first golf course in the State of Florida, right here in Sarasota. The Bobby Jones Golf Club is a local landmark that was dedicated to the legendary golfer in 1927. The Club encompasses a newly renovated 18-hole Championship Course, a new Gillespie 9-hole adjustable Par 3 Course, and a state-of-the-art practice facility. In 2022, the City created a conservation easement encompassing 90 acres on the eastern portion of the property named the Nature Park at Bobby Jones.

Sarasota is connected to the Florida Cultural Coast, a distinct area of western Florida that encompasses a richness of cultural arts and natural beauty. Sarasota boasts a remarkable assortment of venues to please any art lover. A popular site is the City's owned and operated Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, which

regularly hosts Broadway musicals, plays, ballets, the Sarasota Orchestra, and other performances. Other favorite venues in the area include the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, The Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe, Asolo Repertory Theatre, Florida Studio Theater, Sarasota Opera House, Sarasota Ballet, and the Sarasota Art Museum – all praised for their impressive displays, beautiful architecture, and rich history.

Sarasota has an assortment of year-round festivals to appeal to everyone's taste. In January the Sarasota Seafood Festival is held; a three-day celebration with delicious food and live music. The world-renowned Sarasota Film Festival occurs in April, and the annual Hungarian Festival is in May. November is a time for many favorites, such as the Chalk Festival and the Siesta Key Crystal Classic international sand sculpting competition.

Sports enthusiasts need not feel left out. Sarasota hosts the spring training grounds for the Baltimore Orioles (MLB), as well as the annual Sarasota Powerboat Grand Prix (formerly the Suncoast Offshore Grand Prix) off the coast of Lido Key Beach. Other sports teams are nearby, like the Tampa Bay Buccaneers (NFL) and the Tampa Bay Lightning (NHL).

The best part of Sarasota is its residents. They are friendly people who love their community. They are a diverse group that welcomes new residents, visitors, and tourists. What is most important to them is Sarasota's small-town charm, and they work hard to protect it while also improving Sarasota's position as a leading waterfront community in western Florida. Neighbors help neighbors, and residents like to volunteer. As far as crime is concerned, the City of Sarasota has seen a reduction in Part I reported crimes in ten of the last twelve years. From 2023 to 2024 it is estimated that the Part I reported crimes will see an approximate 22% decline.

Schools are excellent with the State awarding 95% of Sarasota schools an "A" or "B" ranking for the 2023-24 school year. Local college campuses include New College of Florida, Ringling College of Art and Design, and the University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee Campus. Situated 65 miles north in Tampa are the University of South Florida and the University of Tampa. Approximately 90 miles south in Fort Myers is Florida Gulf Coast University.

Sarasota offers a variety of residential options, such as condominiums, townhouses, and single- and multi-family homes. According to *Realtor.com*, the median sold home price is \$549,000. As of December 2024, a single-family three-bedroom, two-bath home of approximately 2,000 square feet may be listed for \$429,000 in one area, whereas a similar home in a beachfront neighborhood may be listed for \$950,000. The diverse housing options provide opportunities for all lifestyles.

Traveling outside of Sarasota is a simple affair. Important roadways running through Sarasota are U.S. 301 and U.S. 41. Six miles east is Interstate 75. Additionally, the Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport is close by for all your air travel needs. If other travel options are required, the St. Petersburg-Clearwater International Airport is 47 miles north, Tampa International Airport is also 55 north, and Southwest Florida International Airport is 88 miles south. For those who enjoy cruises, Port Tampa Bay is 60 miles north, Port Canaveral is 175 miles east, and Port Miami is 230 miles southeast.

Ranked #3 in 2023 and #11 in 2024 for “Best Places to Live in the U.S.” (U.S. News & World Report), Sarasota is a pristine, coastal community that residents are thrilled to call home. Sarasota’s small-town feel, access to large city amenities, and moderate year-round temperatures make the City an attractive location for families, business professionals, retirees, and tourists. Sarasota has an abundance of opportunities and is the kind of place where you want to work, raise a family, and put down roots.

HISTORY

Sarasota’s name origin is heavily debated, from being named after Spanish conquistador Hernando de Soto’s daughter Sara, to stemming from a phrase from the Calusa indigenous tribe, “sara-de-cota,” translated as “an area of land easily observed.” Regardless, the area has an unquestionably distinct history.

During the 1500s, Spanish explorers first came to the Sarasota area. Over the next two centuries, many fishing camps formed as the region developed a reputation as a prolific fishery. As legal jurisdiction changed between various countries, so did the population’s diversity. Some notable groups included the British Corps of Colonial Marines after the War of 1812, as well as the

Maroons and Red Stick Creek Indians after the First Seminole War.

In 1902, Sarasota was incorporated as a town, with John Hamilton Gillespie sworn in as mayor to a population of 53. In 1913, Sarasota was reincorporated as a city. Due to incredible growth and caution from previous poorly managed expansion efforts, the City adopted a Commission-Manager form of government in 1945 and appointed its first City Manager.

Several influential individuals impacted Sarasota. One significant figure was John Ringling (of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circuses), whose wintertime presence earned Sarasota the moniker “Circus City.” He saw great potential in the area’s real estate and built his magnificent Venetian-style mansion as his permanent winter residence. He even used his elephants to build

Table 1: Sarasota Demographics

Distribution by Race		Distribution by Age	
White	66.2%	0 to 15	11.6%
Black	12.4%	15 to 25	11.2%
Asian	3.1%	25 to 45	22.4%
Native American	0.5%	45 to 65	25.2%
Some Other / Two or More Races	17.8%	65 to 85	24.3%
Total	100.0%	Over 85	5.3%
Hispanic (all races)	17.9%	Estimated Population: 57,602	

Educational Achievements (25 & Over) and Other Statistics	
High School or Higher	91.7%
Bachelor’s Degree or Higher	40.8%
Median Age—Sarasota	49.8
Median Age—U.S.	38.9
Median Household Income Sarasota	\$68,870
Median Household Income—U.S.	\$74,580
Poverty Rate	13.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table II: Principal Employers, Sarasota County, FL

Employer	Industry	Employees
Sarasota Memorial Hospital	Healthcare	9,785
School Board of Sarasota County	Education	5,917
Publix Super Markets, Inc.	Retail	4,611
Sarasota County Government	Government	3,692
PGT Innovations	Building Product Manufacturing	2,416
Walmart	Retail	1,883
City of North Port	Government	896
City of Sarasota	Government	865
Target	Retail	585
Lowe's Home Centers	Retail	555

Source: Sarasota, FL 2023 CAFR

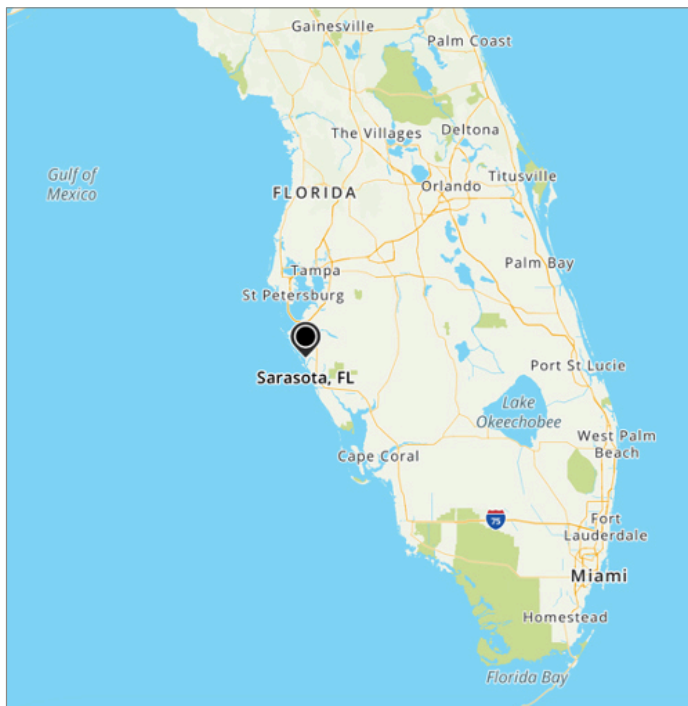


Figure 1: Location of Sarasota, FL

the first bridge connecting St. Armands Key to the mainland. Another notable figure is Bertha Palmer, a philanthropist and businesswoman. Owning the largest shares of land in the area during the early 1900s, she boasted of the area's beauty and opportunities as a tourist destination. Additionally, her large-scale farming and dairy-producing practices pioneered many crop developments for far-reaching national shipping techniques.

DEMOGRAPHICS

See Table I for the City of Sarasota's demographics. The area is home to many retirees, as well as a fluctuating seasonal population. The City's functional (seasonal plus tourist) population swells to over 100,000 during the winter months.

CLIMATE

Sarasota experiences a humid subtropical climate. During summer months, high temperatures reach into the low 90s, and low temperatures are in the 70s. Humidity levels during this time can easily reach

70%, with most rainfall occurring between June and September. Winter months are much milder and more comfortable, with an average temp in mid 70s. Overall, the climate is quite moderate. Temperatures rarely go below 53° F. The area receives an average rainfall of 56 inches, and snowfall is exceptionally rare.

Hurricane season runs from June through November. Like other places in peninsular Florida, Sarasota experiences some level of risk of flooding and wind damage from tropical storms and hurricanes. Presently, Sarasota is continuing its recovery efforts from the damage caused by Hurricanes Debby, Helene, and Milton in 2024.

GEOGRAPHY

Found along the Gulf Coast in peninsular Florida, Sarasota is 24.08 square miles, comprised of 9.39 square miles of water and 14.70 square miles of land. Mostly flat, the region's average elevation is 16 feet above sea level. City limits consist of numerous islands ("keys"), such as Bird Key, St. Armands Key, and Lido Key.

As the Sarasota County seat, the City is located in the North Port-Bradenton-Sarasota, Florida Metropolitan Statistical Area. Nearby are Bradenton (13 miles north), Tampa (60 miles north), and Fort Myers (75 miles south). To the west is the Gulf of Mexico.

The City of Sarasota is a major tourist area. As mentioned previously, the City’s functional (seasonal plus tourist) population swells to over 100,000 during the winter months. As such, the provision of tourist accommodations, restaurants, entertainment, financial institutions, and health services constitutes a major source of employment and contributes significantly to the stability of the local economy. Sarasota also strives to continue its legacy as a City that is economically vibrant while successfully managing its growth and providing a high quality of life.

See Table 2 for a list of the County’s Principal Employers.

The City of Sarasota utilizes a Commission-Manager form of government. The City Commission is comprised of five Commissioners, two are at-large and three from single-member districts. Elections are staggered and held in November during even-numbered years. District seat elections were just held in November 2024, whereas at-large seat elections will be held in November 2026. Terms are for four years, with no limits. Currently, one Commissioner has been newly elected, another is two years into serving their first term, and the remaining three Commissioners have served one term or more.

FIGURE 2: SARASOTA ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



Every November, Commissioners select the Mayor and Vice Mayor amongst themselves. The City Commission also appoints three Charter Officials, known as the City Manager, City Auditor and Clerk, and City Attorney.

The City Manager serves at the pleasure of the Commission. They serve as the City's Chief Administrator and are responsible to the Commission for the proper administration of all affairs of the City, excluding the responsibilities authorized to the City Attorney and the City Auditor and Clerk. Of the five-seat commission, four votes are required to hire the City Manager, and a simple majority of three votes is needed to terminate.

The City's total budget for fiscal year 2024-2025 is \$305,678,879, with a general fund budget of \$109,961,606. Sarasota employs 880 full- and part-time employees, spread across various departments. The City Manager supervises approximately 860 employees, and the City Auditor and Clerk oversees the remaining employees. The City Attorney is presently an external firm, though it may become an internal department upon Commission direction.

The City's table of organization represents the numerous departments within the city organization of which the Police Department, Parks and Recreation, the Utilities Department and the Public Works Department are the largest staff units. In addition to these departments, the remaining employees are dispersed throughout the Development Services department, Planning, Financial Administration, Human Resources, Governmental Affairs, Information Technology, Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, Communications, and the City Manager's Office.

The City has two unions. The Teamster Local 173 (membership of approximately 330 individuals) represents mostly labor, trades, and some entry-level clerical and office staff. The other is the International Union of Police Associations, which represents about 190 members distributed across two collective bargaining units. One unit is comprised of officers, Sergeants, and Crime Scene Investigators. The second unit includes Lieutenants.

The City of Sarasota provides a full array of services, such as a full-service Police Department, Utility Billing, Water, Wastewater,

and garbage collection and recycling. Other services include Streets and Highways, Parks and Recreation, Development Services, and Planning Department. The few services contracted out include service maintenance on police vehicles, large asphalt projects, and some engineering design and construction for both Public Works, Parks and Recreation, and Utility's projects.

THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

While the City has numerous challenges, they are manageable and are opportunities for a City Manager to leave a lasting legacy.

First, adapting to the variations of an elected body is always a challenge. Roles and responsibilities will need to be refined, relationships developed, and communication paths created. Part of this analysis will involve reviewing the Commission-Manager relationship and ensuring that all parties are operating within their scope. Part of this effort will also include creating a shared vision and a strategic plan with the elected body. Additionally, Sarasota has active public involvement, which has its benefits and hindrances.

Second, Sarasota is growing, which comes with its own set of challenges. Keeping up with the City's infrastructure needs is a daily struggle. The pursuance of constructing and maintaining roads, buildings, and parks, and updating equipment is always on the minds of personnel. As both the population and city are growing rapidly, working with City staff, as well as other governmental and private entities, to determine new solutions for the complex problems associated with significant growth, will be a challenging opportunity for the new City Manager.

An associated challenge with growth is that even though the City is increasing at a rampant rate, residents want the area to maintain its small-town feel. In fact, many residents choose to live in Sarasota due to its charming and quaint environment. This kind of request will require a delicate balance that only a practiced City Manager will be able to facilitate.

Third, 2024 has proven that hurricanes are a force to be reckoned with. With 140 mph winds, 8-10 feet of storm surge, and destruction that left behind wind-damaged, power-less, and swamped neighborhood homes, streets, and businesses.



Ensuring that emergency and safety plans are in place is a must. Also, working with FEMA will be an important task for the next City Manager. Navigating the process for the best outcome for Sarasota will require finesse and diligence.

Finally, similar to the vast majority of cities across the country, affordable housing is a major issue. Housing prices currently prohibit young families from moving into Sarasota. The next City Manager should plan to work with developers to help expedite the construction of affordable housing or find an alternative solution that will not impact the ambiance of the community. More efforts and fresh ideas will need to be utilized to make housing more economical.

As both a challenge and an opportunity is Sarasota's exceptional diversity. Diversity is central to the community's identity and a source of community pride. Communication across multiple cultural and economic perspectives requires a dedication of effort that is atypical to many cities, including Sarasota.

Accordingly, the next City Manager will be busy. Steadying the organization, leading residents through recovery efforts, and properly guiding growth, with its accompanying challenges, will be the priority. If the Manager is successful in these areas, the remaining challenges will be much easier to address.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The Commission is seeking an outstanding leader and manager to be its next City Manager. The individual will have a demonstrated track record of achievement. The individual will be a consensus and team builder who knows how to balance competing points of view and find common ground. They will be a motivator and

not someone who spends most of their time behind a desk. Rather the individual will be a leader who is in the field with the staff and in the community with the public.

The Commission wants someone to work with as a partner and a trusted advisor. The Manager will be open and honest with the Commission, staff, and the public with a focus on regular communication with all parties. The individual will be confident and strong in presenting ideas. The Commission is definitely not looking for a “yes” person, but the City Manager will also recognize the chain of command and that the City Commission has the final say. The individual will ensure all the Commission Members have the same information at the same time and that there will be no surprises.

The City Manager will have excellent communication skills and know how to relate to a wide variety of constituents, whether wealthy or economically challenged, degreed or not, regardless of race or ethnicity. In other words, they will keep everyone informed and resolve differences. It will be important to develop strategies that communicate clearly to the residents how policies and projects will benefit the community. The City Manager will be aware of the potential impacts social media can have. Consequently, the individual will be quick to correct misinformation and misconceptions. They will be proactive in telling the City’s story while being completely transparent and honest.

Customer service will not just be a catchphrase with the Manager but rather, along with integrity and a strong moral compass, a core principle, and a way of life. They will be someone who leads by example and encourages the staff to find ways to get to yes within the bounds of the law and ordinances. The City is looking for someone with high ethical standards and integrity. The individual will ensure that rules and services are consistently applied to all.

The next manager will be innovative and encourage creativity. The City staff in Sarasota are excellent, so the next Manager will ensure that staff members have the necessary resources, and then step back to let them do their jobs. That said, the individual will expect to be kept informed, and accountability will be important.

Personally, the individual will be intelligent, upbeat, friendly, outgoing, and relentlessly positive – someone with a “can do” attitude and who is visionary yet practical. They will also be consistent, cheerfully persistent, high energy, and definitely not a bureaucrat.

In terms of specific skills, the individual will have demonstrated success in management, budgeting and finance, planning and land development and redevelopment, emergency management, working with FEMA, and grant writing. Knowledge of and experience in working with community groups and agencies and in intergovernmental relations will also be important to the individual’s success.

The ideal candidate must have a minimum of five to ten years of progressive senior management experience as a City Manager, Assistant City Manager, or Department Head. A bachelor's degree in business, public administration, public policy, or a related field is expected. While not mandatory, a master's degree is highly desirable. Knowledge of Florida and its laws are pluses, but not requirements.

The Commission will make a commitment to its next City manager’s success and wants a candidate who will embrace Sarasota’s enormous potential. The next City Manager should view this position as a destination and stay at least five to ten years.

COMPENSATION

The salary range is \$225,000 to \$305,000. The salary will depend on qualifications and experience. Benefits are excellent. The City Manager will be part of the Florida Retirement System unless they choose to opt-out.

THE MOST RECENT CITY MANAGER

The previous City Manager retired after serving 15 years for the City of Sarasota, in the Deputy City Manager role, with nearly four years as the City Manager.

RESIDENCY

The City Manager is expected to live within city limits.

HOW TO APPLY

E-mail your cover letter and resume to Recruit26@cb-asso.com by February 7th. Please apply as soon as possible as resumes will be screened as they arrive. Questions should be directed to Rick Conner at (915) 227-7002 or Scott Krim at (801) 628-8364.

INTERNAL CANDIDATES

The City Commission is committed to a level playing field and the best person will be selected for the position, whether internal or external.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Under Florida's Public Records Act, a submitted application is deemed a public record. As a practical matter, we do not expect media coverage until at least the semifinalists are named, and perhaps not even then. However, Sarasota is heavily media transparent, so public records requests may occur at any stage of this process.

THE PROCESS

Applications will be screened between February 8th and March 17th. Finalists will be selected the week of March 24th. A reception and interviews will be held on April 10th and 11th. A selection will be made shortly thereafter by the City Commission.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The City of Sarasota is an Equal Opportunity Employer. It strongly encourages women, minorities, and veterans to apply.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For additional information about the City, visit:

www.sarasotafl.gov/

www.visitsarasota.com/

www.sarasotachamber.com/

