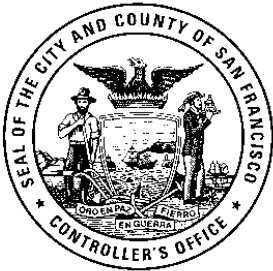
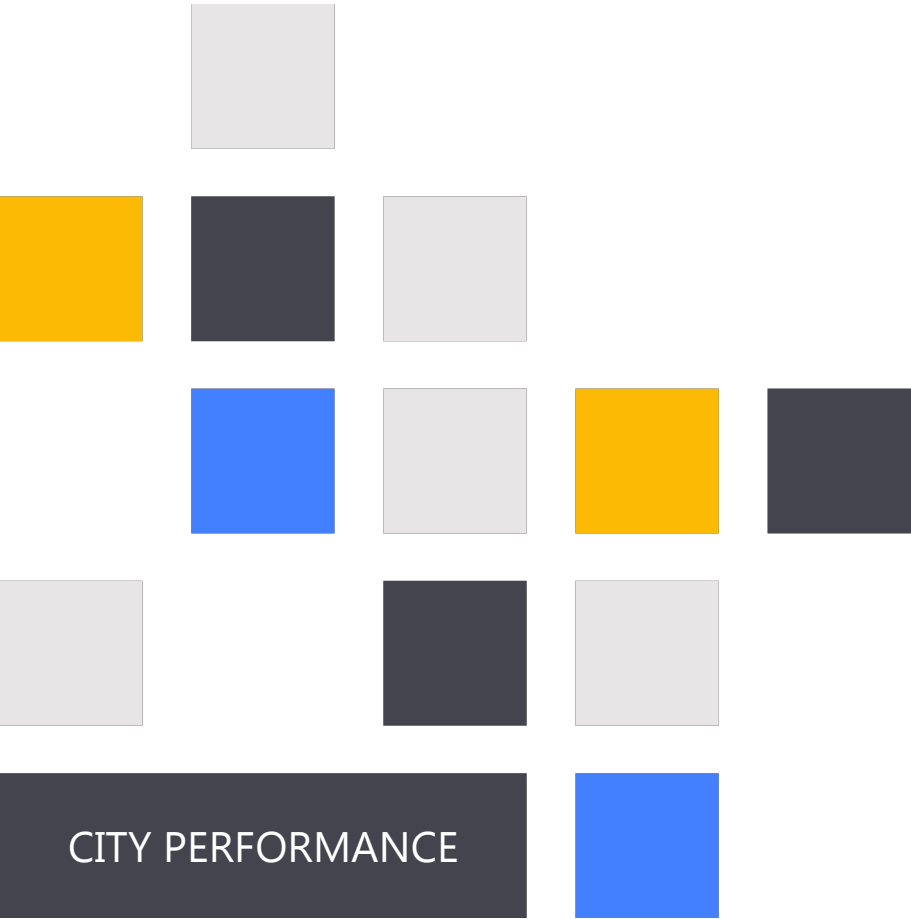


# Park Maintenance Standards

Selected Highlights | FY2021-22



February 1, 2023

City and County of San Francisco  
Office of the Controller  
City Services Auditor

## About City Performance

The City Services Auditor (CSA) was created in the Office of the Controller through an amendment to the San Francisco City Charter that was approved by voters in November 2003. Within CSA, *City Performance* ensures the City's financial integrity and promotes efficient, effective, and accountable government.

### City Performance Goals:

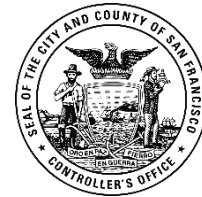
- City departments make transparent, data-driven decisions in policy development and operational management.
- City departments align programming with resources for greater efficiency and impact.
- City departments have the tools they need to innovate, test, and learn.

### City Performance Team:

Natasha Mihal, *Director*

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Craig Dermody, *Performance Analyst*



### Recreation and Parks Department Project Sponsors:

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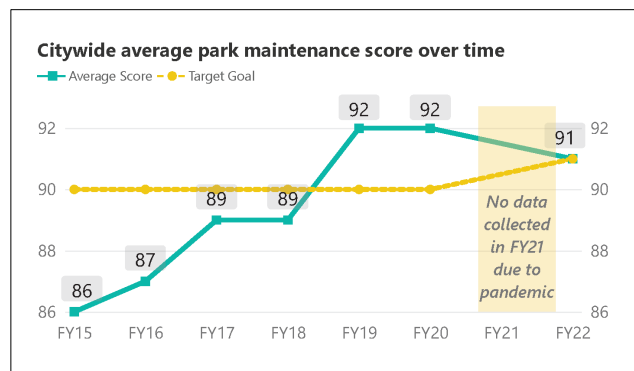
 [Twitter](#)

# Executive Summary

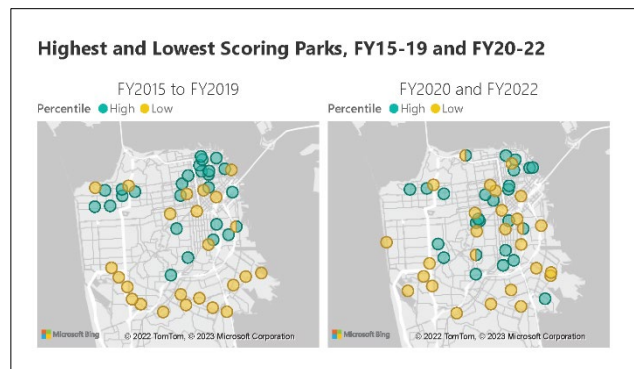
Under an amendment approved by voters in 2003, [Appendix F](#) of the City Charter requires the City Services Auditor division of the Controller’s Office (CON) to work in cooperation with the Recreation and Parks Department (RPD) to establish objective and measurable park maintenance standards, and to assess the extent to which the City’s parks meet those standards on an annual basis.

This report highlights the results of evaluations from July 2021 to June 2022 (Fiscal Year 2022). Due to the COVID pandemic, evaluations were paused from April 2020 to July 2021. For more information, visit the [San Francisco Park Maintenance Scores online dashboard](#). RPD and CON have established maintenance standards for all parks, such as whether a building is free of graffiti or a drinking fountain works. A park’s maintenance score is the percent of these standards that are met. A perfect score of 100% would mean the park passed all applicable maintenance standards. See the *Methodology* section in the Appendix for more information and a scoring example. **FY22 park maintenance scores were generally unchanged from pre-pandemic levels in FY20. RPD met or exceeded its target goal for the citywide average score in FY19, FY20, and FY22.** To date, scores have risen significantly since FY15 when the program’s current methodology was adopted.

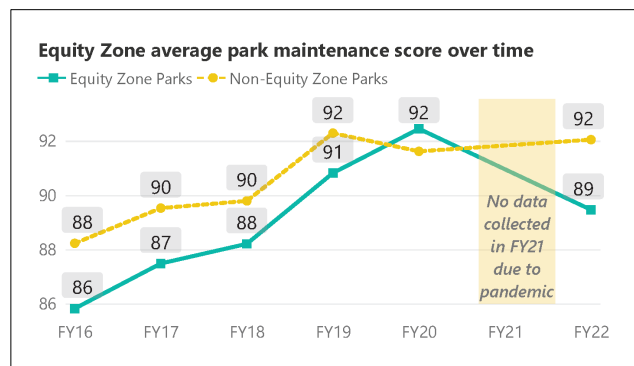
- The citywide average score was 91% in FY22, down 1 percentage point from FY20.
- Since FY15, the citywide score has increased by an average of 0.8 percentage points each year.
- The citywide average score met its target goals in FY19, FY20, and FY22. This recent performance led to the target goal increasing to 91% in FY22.



- From FY15-FY19, the City’s highest-scoring parks were concentrated in the northern part of the City while its lowest-scoring parks were concentrated in the south and east.
- FY20-FY22 saw this trend reversed, with a more equitable distribution of both high- and low-scoring parks across the entire City.



- Parks in *Equity Zones*—communities negatively impacted by environmental health risks—scored an average of 89% in FY22, down 3 percentage points from a high of 92% in FY20.
- Non-Equity Zone parks scored an average of 92% in FY22, slightly above the citywide average.



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# Introduction

## Background

The Controller's Office (CON) works in close cooperation with the Recreation and Parks Department (RPD) to evaluate the City's park maintenance and cleaning operations. CON and RPD developed objective and measurable standards of maintenance for each park. Each quarter, CON and RPD staff conduct park evaluations across the City to assess each park's adherence to these maintenance standards. On an annual basis, CON analyzes and aggregates the results of these evaluations as part of its public reporting. This is the 15<sup>th</sup> annual park maintenance standards report based on the results of evaluations from FY19-20 and FY21-22. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, park evaluations were paused from April 2020 to July 2021. As a result, no evaluation data is available for FY20-21.

This report contains selected highlights from the [Park Maintenance Scores Dashboard](#). The highlights presented in this report are based on evaluations of RPD properties conducted by RPD and CON staff over the course of the fiscal year (July 1 through June 30). Each park has a different set of features to be evaluated—such as an athletic field or a park's trees. Each feature is scored based on how many park maintenance standards it meets (or fails to meet). Feature scores make up each park's maintenance score, which in turn are aggregated to make up the citywide average score. For more information on how scores are calculated, see the *Methodology* and *Park Maintenance Scoring Fictitious Example* in the Appendix.

## Report Content

The primary purpose of this report is to present the public with the latest park maintenance data trends and evaluations. This report is comprised of four sections: Citywide Park Scores (the performance of the park system broadly), Selected Park Scores (notable trends in specific parks), Equity Zones (looking at the maintenance of parks in communities affected by environmental health risks), and Feature Scores (notable trends of specific park features). At the end of the report is an Appendix, which contains additional resources and an explanation of how scores are calculated.

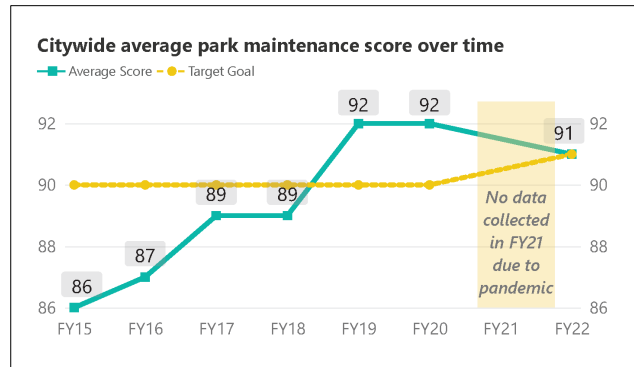
A secondary purpose of the report and dashboard is to support RPD's operational decision-making, with the ultimate goal of continuous park maintenance improvement. Park maintenance scores are also important because the citywide average score is one of the key performance indicators in [RPD's Strategic Plan](#) under "Strategy 1: Inspire Place." This performance indicator is also included in both the [Mayor's Budget Book](#) and the Controller's Office [Annual Performance Results](#) and [City Scorecards](#).

# Citywide Park Scores

Citywide scores reflect the overall maintenance quality of the parks system. The City [revised its park maintenance evaluation methodology](#) in FY15 to improve analysis and reporting of maintenance challenges. RPD sets a target goal for the citywide average score each year for [San Francisco's Annual Performance Results](#).

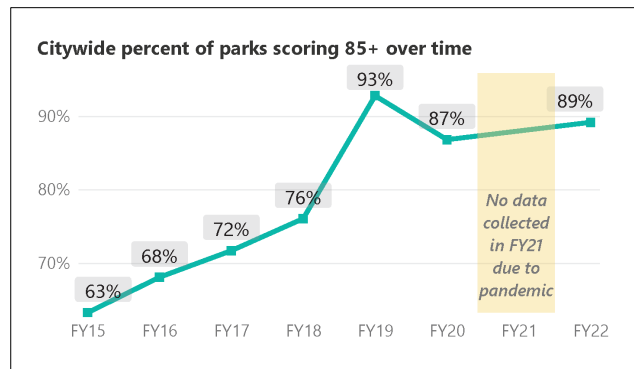
## Citywide Average Score

- The citywide average park maintenance score is calculated as the mean of each fiscal year's annual park scores.
- The citywide average score was 91% in FY22, meeting its annual performance goal.
- Since FY15, the citywide score has increased by an average of 0.8 percentage points annually.



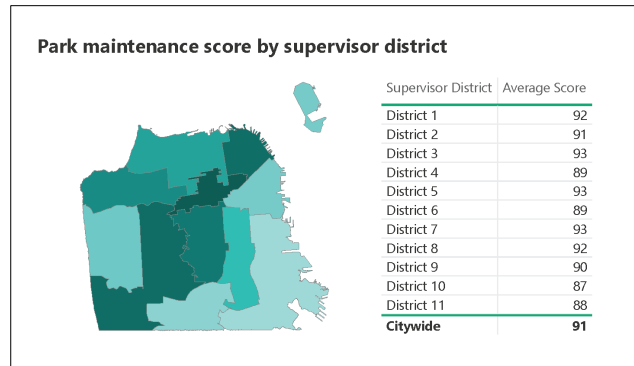
## Percent of Parks Scoring 85%+

- In addition to the target goal set for the Annual Performance Results, RPD also tracks the percent of parks which receive a score of 85% or higher. A score above 85% generally indicates a park is well-maintained and its features are in good condition.
- 89% of parks scored over this benchmark in FY22, up 2 percentage points from FY20.



## Supervisor District Average Scores

- Each of the City's *Supervisor Districts* receives an average park maintenance score, measured as the average of each districts' annual park scores.
- The highest average district score was 93% in FY22 while the lowest was 87%.
- Districts scored similarly, with 10 of 11 scoring within +/- 2 points of the FY22 citywide average of 91%. The spread of district scores continues to narrow: FY22 results compare favorably to FY15 when only 7 of 11 districts scored within +/- 2 percentage points of the citywide average.

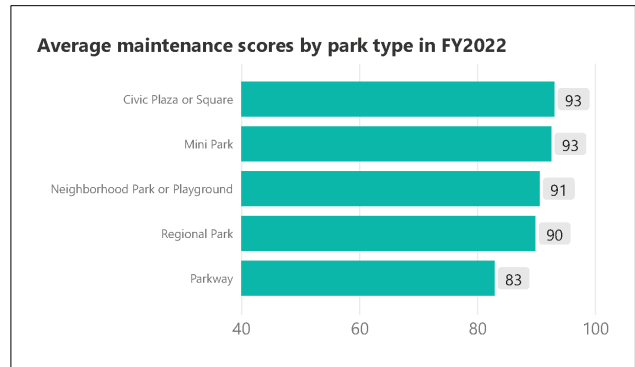


# Selected Park Scores

166 parks across the City are evaluated as part of the park maintenance evaluation program. In San Francisco, every resident is less than a 10 minute walk from a park; comparing year-over-year scores of specific parks allows residents to better grasp how their neighborhood parks' maintenance changes over time.

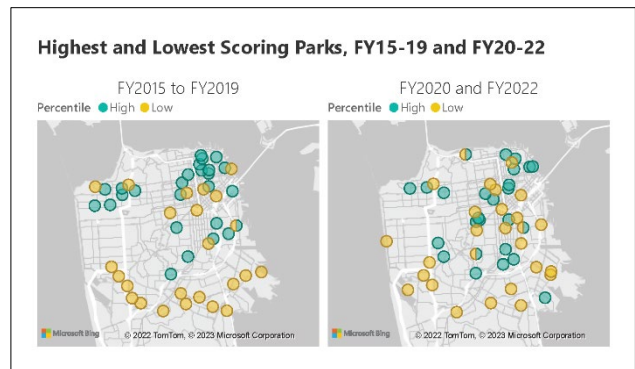
## Park Type Average Scores

- Parks are classified into different types to help RPD more equitably compare the scores of different kinds of parks.
- Regional Parks (e.g. Golden Gate Park) and Parkways (e.g. Lower Great Highway) may be the largest parks, but 88% of all evaluated parks are Neighborhood Parks or Mini Parks.



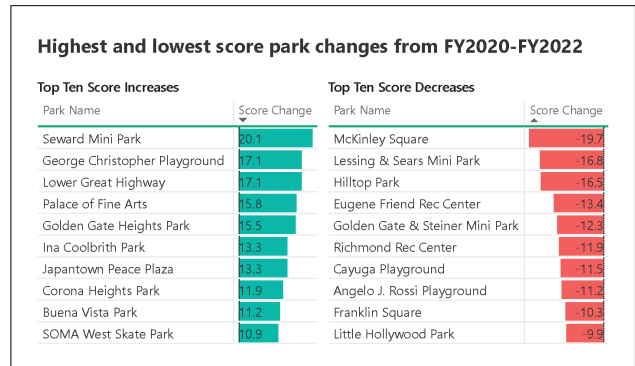
## Highest- and Lowest-Scoring Parks

- Tracking highest- and lowest-scoring parks is important to ensure all neighborhoods have access to high quality parks. From FY15 to FY19, top-scoring parks were concentrated in the north while low-scoring parks were in the south/east.
- FY20 and FY22 saw a more even distribution of highest- and lowest-scoring parks across the City.



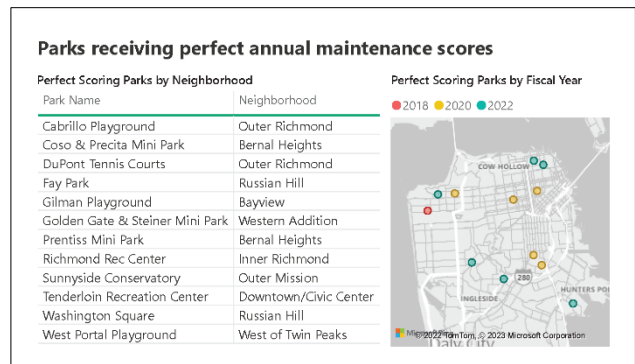
## Largest Park Score Changes

- From FY20 to FY22, 37% of parks saw their average score increase by a median of +3.0 percentage points. 58% of parks experienced a score decline by a median of -4.5 points.
- The median change for all parks was -1.2 percentage points from FY20 to FY22.



## Perfect-Scoring Parks

- 6 parks received perfect scores of 100% in FY22: DuPont Tennis Courts, Fay Park, Gilman Playground, Sunnyside Conservatory, Washington Square, and West Portal Playground. This was the highest number of perfect scores in a single year.
- There were 5 perfect-scoring parks in FY20, none in FY19, and 1 in FY18.



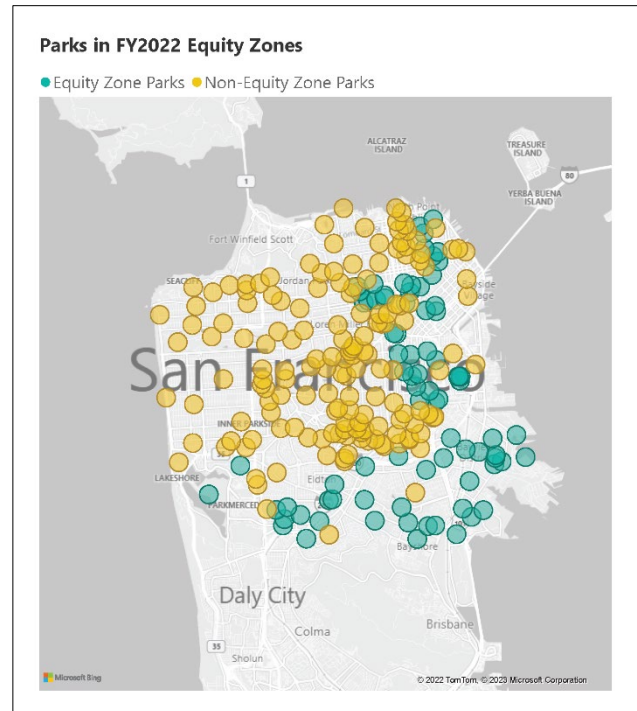


# Equity Zones

Equity Zones are neighborhoods disproportionately affected by environmental health risks. High-quality parks in Equity Zones can help to mitigate these risks. After an analysis of best practices, RPD developed a new standard for mapping Equity Zones in FY22 based on the [Environmental Justice Communities](#) tool developed by the San Francisco Planning Department. The new standard helps RPD meet its [Strategic Plan objectives](#).

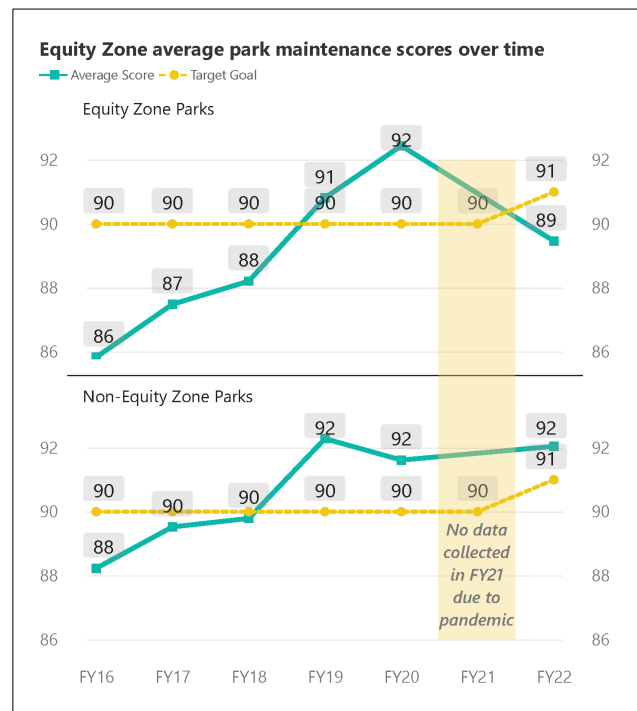
## FY22 Equity Zone Parks

- In FY22, 67 out of the total 166 parks in the park maintenance evaluation program were located in Equity Zones. The full list of Equity Zone parks broken out by neighborhood is shown below.
  - Mission - 14 parks
  - Bayview - 10 parks
  - Western Addition - 8 parks
  - Downtown/Civic Center - 6 parks
  - Visitacion Valley - 5 parks
  - Ocean View and Outer Mission - 4 parks
  - Chinatown and Excelsior - 3 parks
  - South of Market and Lakeshore - 2 parks
  - Crocker Amazon, North Beach, Nob Hill, and Bernal Heights - 1 park
- The number of Equity Zone parks may change year-over-year based on annual changes in the underlying environmental health and socio-economic data.



## Equity Zone and Non-Equity Zone Average Scores

- The average park maintenance score for parks in Equity Zones was 89% in FY22, down 3 percentage points from FY20.
- FY20 saw Equity Zone parks score higher than non-Equity Zone parks for the first time.
- The average park maintenance score for non-Equity Zone parks was 92%, unchanged from FY2020.



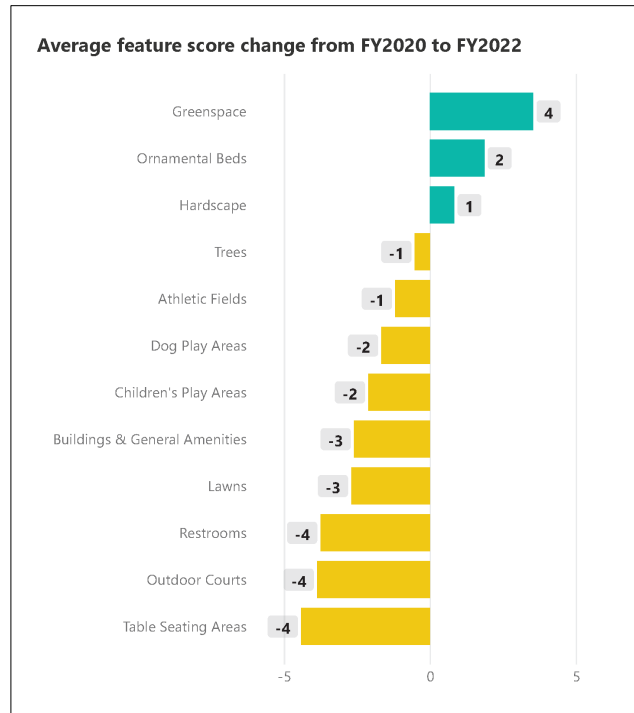


# Feature Scores

Analyzing feature scores separately from park scores lets residents find the parks best suited to their interests, like a well-maintained tennis court, dog play area, or garden. RPD also uses feature scores to better plan maintenance needs across the park system by identifying the features with the most maintenance issues.

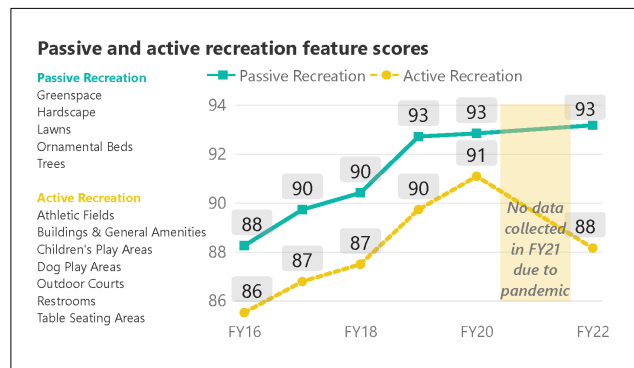
## FY22 Citywide Feature Scores

- Citywide average feature scores are calculated as the average of all annual scores for a particular feature across all parks in the City. Comparing feature scores against one another is not advised, as some features have more or stricter maintenance standards to meet. However, comparing annual changes within each feature can reveal notable maintenance trends over time.
- Most Feature scores declined from FY20 to FY22, with the exceptions of Greenspace (+4 percentage points), Ornamental Beds (+2 points), and Hardscape (+1 point).
- The features which saw the largest year-over-year score decreases were Restrooms (-4 percentage points), Table Seating Areas (-4 points), and Outdoor Courts (-4 points).



## Passive Recreation and Active Recreation Scores

- "Passive Recreation" features (those which are indirectly used—Greenspace, Hardscape, Lawns, Ornamental Beds, and Trees) scored 93% in FY22 while "Active Recreation" features (those which are directly used—Athletic Fields, Buildings & General Amenities, Children's Play Areas, Outdoor Courts, Restrooms, and Table Seating Areas) scored 88%.
- These scores are calculated as the average of each feature's annual citywide score, grouped into Passive Recreation or Active Recreation.
- Historically, Active Recreation scores trail Passive Recreation scores by ~3 percentage points because they require more frequent maintenance, especially when park attendance surges.



# Appendix

## Links and Resources

All information presented in this report are publicly accessible. To explore the data and trends highlighted in this report, visit the Park Maintenance Scores online dashboard under the **Dashboard** section below. The dashboard is an interactive web page with park maintenance data visualized and organized together for convenience and clarity. To view current and historic annual park maintenance scores, click on either of the links in the **Datasets** section. Use the links in the **Reports** section to see other previous annual reports, to read RPD’s latest update to their Strategic Plan, or to learn more about Equity Zones and the FY22 transition to using *Environmental Justice Communities*. Explore the links in the **Standards** section to download a comprehensive list of park maintenance standards and to learn more about park maintenance scores.

### Maintenance Scores Dashboard

[RPD Park Maintenance Scores Dashboard](#)

### Park Evaluation Datasets

[Annual Park Evaluation Scores, 2015-2022](#)

(current standards and methodology)

[Annual Park Evaluation Scores, 2005-2014](#)

(former standards and methodology)

### Park Evaluation and Related Reports

[Park Maintenance Standards Annual Reports](#)

(Controller’s Office Website)

[RPD Strategic Plan, 2021-2025 Update](#)

[Environmental Justice Communities Framework](#)

### Park Maintenance Standards

[RPD Park Maintenance Standards](#)

[RPD Park Maintenance Scores Website](#)



## Methodology

In FY22, there were 295 park maintenance **standards**. These standards—such as the presence of hazardous trash on the ground—are categorized into 31 **elements**. Elements are related to some quality or goal of park maintenance like Cleanliness, Equipment, or Lighting. Every park has **features**, such as Athletic Fields, Restrooms, or Dog Play Areas. An evaluator will check every maintenance standard for each feature in a park. If a standard fails inspection (e.g. a Lawn has too many weeds) then its entire element (e.g. Turf Maintenance) would fail inspection. An element can only pass inspection if all its underlying maintenance standards pass inspection. After an evaluator inspects all standards, a feature score can be calculated as the number of passing elements divided by the total number of elements (including failing elements). This process is repeated until every feature in the park has a score. The park score is then calculated as the average of all its feature scores.

## Park Maintenance Scoring Fictitious Example: San Francisco Park

Maintenance Standard	Evaluation Result	Element Score	Feature Score	Park Score
Hazardous litter	Pass →	Cleanliness	Greenspace 1/2 points = <b>50%</b> →	(50% + 100% + 33% + 67%) / 4 = <b>63%</b>
Large, abandoned item	Fail →	0 points →		
Plants intrude on path	Pass →	Pruning		
Plants obstruct signage	Pass →	1 point →		
Bulging chain link	Pass →	Fencing 1 point →	Buildings & Amenities 1/1 point = <b>100%</b> →	
Sharp fence edge	Pass →			
Gate cannot open	Pass →			
Pool of standing water	Fail →	Drainage 0 points →	Dog Play Areas 1/3 points = <b>33%</b> →	
Feces or bagged feces	Pass →	Cleanliness		
Large spot of litter	Fail →	0 points →		
Broken dog bag dispenser	Pass →	Equipment 1 point →		
Light source is too dark	Pass →	Lighting 1 point →	Restrooms 2/3 points = <b>67%</b> →	
Light source is broken	Pass →			
Chipping wall paint	Pass →	Paint 1 point →		
Paint touch-up colors do not match	Pass →			
Gender or hours sign not posted	Fail →	Signage 0 points →		
Sign text is illegible	Fail →			

A park maintenance score of 0% means every element failed (an element fails if one or more standards fail). A park maintenance score of 100% means that all standards under all elements passed. In this hypothetical example, the park received a score of 63% based on the Restrooms, Dog Play Areas, Buildings & Amenities, and Greenspace feature scores.