Park Maintenance Standards

Key Findings Fiscal Year 2024





Prepared by

OFFICE OF THE CONTROLLER

CITY PERFORMANCE

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About the Controller's Office

The Controller is the chief financial officer and auditor for the City and County of San Francisco. We produce regular reports on the City's financial condition, economic condition, and the performance of City government. We are also responsible for key aspects of the City's financial operations — from processing payroll for City employees to processing and monitoring the City's budget.

Our team includes financial, tech, accounting, analytical and other professionals who work hard to secure the City's financial integrity and promote efficient, effective, and accountable government. We strive to be a model for good government and to make the City a better place to live and work.

About the City Performance Division

The City Performance team is part of the City Services Auditor (CSA) within the Controller's Office. CSA's mandate, shared with the Audits Division, is to monitor and improve the overall performance and efficiency of City Government. The team works with City departments across a range of subject areas, including transportation, public health, human services, homelessness, capital planning, and public safety.

City Performance Goals:

- Support departments in making transparent, data-driven decisions in policy development and operational management
- Guide departments in aligning programming with resources for greater efficiency and impact.
- Provide departments with the tools they need to innovate, test, and learn.

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Executive Summary

City voters added a requirement to the City Charter in 2003 to establish standards for park maintenance. The charter also requires that Controller's Office (CON) and Recreation and Parks Department (RPD) evaluate how well the City's parks meet those standards each year. This report covers the evaluation findings from fiscal year 2023-2024 (FY24).

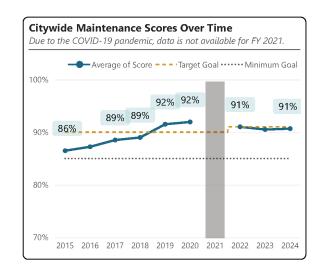
The City's parks continue to meet their maintenance targets and generally show no significant difference in park maintenance across geographies or park groups.¹

KEY RESULTS

The citywide average park score is 91%, the same as last year. The average score is also above the minimum goal of 85%, which RPD establishes as the benchmark for a wellmaintained park. More than 85% of the 171 parks meet or exceed this threshold, meaning that more than four-fifths of parks across the City are well-maintained.

While we reviewed park scores across various groups, there are few *statistically significant* differences, revealing the differences are not meaningful. We see no statistically significant difference across average Supervisor district scores, indicating no variation in park maintenance by the district. There also are no statistically significant differences in average scores between parks in Equity Zones and those outside of them. Equity Zones, an RPD designation, are neighborhoods impacted by historic environmental health risks. While having well-maintained parks does not undo the historic environmental harm, the data shows park maintenance quality is the same between parks inside and outside of the Equity Zones. The average score for both groups is around 90%. Average scores were consistent by Park Type and by Park Size.

High- and low-scoring parks are distributed relatively evenly throughout most parts of City. The nine highestscoring parks are located throughout all parts of the City





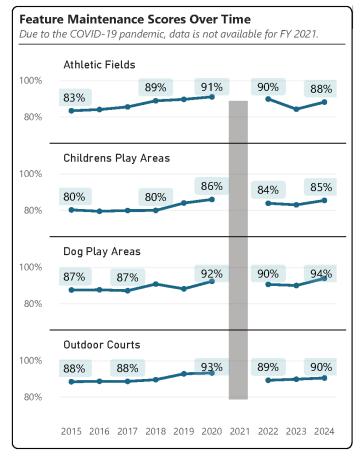
¹ For a discussion of significance testing, see Appendix 1.

except the Southwest.² The eight lowest-scoring parks are located in most parts of the City, except the South. The highest-scoring parks have historically scored well, but many of the lowest-scoring parks had an unusual drop this year. Future monitoring will assess for any new trends.

The report highlights four park features: Children's Play Areas, Dog Play Areas, Outdoor Courts, and Athletic Fields. Average Athletic Field scores improved from 84% to 88% over the past year, possibly due to renovations to 11 Athletic Fields across the system. The Children's Play Areas also increased from last year, from 83% to 85%. The scores of other highlighted features remained similar to last year, without any statistically significant changes.

The report also highlights two park elements: Cleanliness and Graffiti. The average scores for both elements remained the similar to last year, with Cleanliness around 94% and Graffiti around 88%.

In the future, evaluations will continue to cover these areas and seek to explore even further.



² Due to ties, we explore the nine highest scoring parks and the eight lowest scoring parks, instead of the highest and lowest 10.

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Introduction

BACKGROUND

Part of a 2003 voter-approved amendment, Appendix F of the City Charter requires the Controller's Office (CON) to work with the Recreation and Parks Department (RPD) to establish objective and measurable park maintenance standards. Appendix F also requires the departments to annually assess the extent to which the City's parks meet those standards. Every three months, CON and RPD staff conduct up to 200 site evaluations across the City to assess the maintenance standards. Based on the results of evaluations through fiscal year 2023-2024 (FY24), this is the 17th annual report on the condition of the City's parks.

The results presented in this report are based on 764 evaluations conducted by RPD and CON staff over the fiscal year (July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024). Parks have different sets of features the staff evaluates, including:

- Athletic Fields
- Buildings and General Amenities
- Children's Play Areas
- Dog Play Areas
- Greenspace
- Hardscape

- Lawns
- Ornamental Beds
- Outdoor Courts
- Restrooms
- Table Seating Areas
- Trees

Park evaluations only focus on the defined maintenance standards for each relevant area. The evaluation does not consider how "nice" the park is or how many amenities it has compared to other parks. For example, a park with multiple creative play structures is not necessarily scored more highly than a park with only swings. Instead, the scores capture if the materials underfoot, such as sand, have weeds growing or spills beyond the boundaries. For more information on how scores are calculated, see *Appendix 2: Scoring Methodology*.

REPORT CONTENT

This report aims to share the FY24 findings with the public, RPD, and other key stakeholders.³ This report also considers how park conditions have changed in recent years. Where possible, we discuss potential drivers of changes in park conditions to help readers understand the causes of these trends. This discussion also may help inform RPD's operational decisions.

The <u>Park Maintenance Evaluation Website</u> provides additional data visualizations not included in this report, such as park-specific scores. It also allows users to interact directly with the evaluation data and select from various filters.

³ City stakeholders use these findings in other places as well. The citywide average park maintenance score is used as a performance indicator across several City publications. It is included in the <u>Mayor's Budget Book</u> and the Controller's Office <u>Annual Performance Results</u> and <u>City Scorecards</u>.

PARK TYPES

San Francisco has five types of parks, defined by RPD:

• **Mini Park:** Typically half an acre or smaller, serving a neighborhood or part of a neighborhood; often a landscaped area with few facilities such as a community garden, a children's play area, outdoor performance space, or a small natural area. For example, Muriel Leff Mini Park in the Inner Richmond.





• **Neighborhood Park or Playground:** Typically varying in size from half an acre to about 30 acres, serving a neighborhood or several neighborhoods; could be a developed park, or playground with a range of facilities such as recreation center, clubhouse or swimming pool, or undeveloped open space. For example, Adam Rodgers Park in the Bayview.

- **Regional Park**: Typically greater than 30 acres in size with a variety of park landscapes, facilities and programs for City residents, regional visitors, and tourists, or any park serving as a tourist destination of historical, cultural, or architectural significance. For example, Golden Gate Park.
- **Parkway:** Typically, a landscaped area developed along a public right of way (i.e. roadway); may have amenities such as restrooms. For example, the Lower Great Highway.



• **Civic Plaza or Square**: An area that is designed to attract citywide and regional visitors; a tourist destination, often entrenched in local culture and history; a gathering place for civic action, processions, and cultural events; could have a landscaped area, a children's play area, a decorative fountain, an underground garage, a concession or public art. For example, the Japantown Peace Plaza in the Western Addition.

GOAL SCORES

Throughout the report, we refer to two different types of goal scores:

- **Minimum goal**: RPD set 85% as the minimum goal and considers parks that meet this to be wellmaintained. The minimum goal has been the same since fiscal year 2015.
- **Target goal:** RPD set 91% as the current target goal, based on the performance and funding of parks in recent years. The target goal was 90% through fiscal year 2021 and has been at 91% since.

Citywide Scores

CITYWIDE SCORES REMAINED CONSISTENT IN FY24

The park maintenance score represents the percentage of maintenance standards successfully met. The score can have a value between 0% to 100%. A score of 0% means a park fails all the relevant standards, and 100% means it meets all standards.

The average park maintenance score for all parks evaluated in FY24 is 91%. There is no statistically significant difference between the FY24 and FY23 citywide scores.

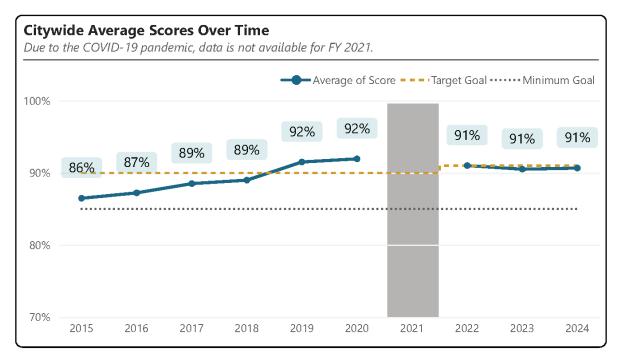


FIGURE 1 - CITYWIDE AVERAGE SCORES OVER TIME

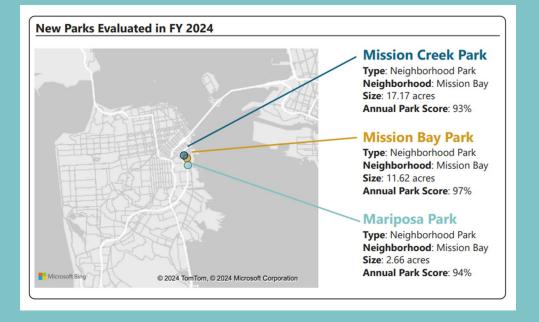
Citywide park scores gradually trended up from 86% in FY15 to 92% in FY20. Post-COVID, the park scores have largely remained near RPD's target goal of 91%. More than 85% of parks scored at or above the 85% minimum goal, meaning that four-fifths of parks across the City are well-maintained.

While there is some variation in park scores over the course of the year, scores do not fluctuate dramatically. In FY24, scores varied by no more than 1-2% across all four quarters.

While the citywide score did not significantly change from last year, we can learn more from looking at the score differences across parks. We will explore changes across various groups of parks throughout the report.

NEW PARKS IN 2024

RPD added three new parks in the Mission Bay neighborhood in FY24: <u>Mission Creek Park. Mission</u> <u>Bay Park</u>, and <u>Mariposa Park</u>. These parks were previously under the Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure, and were not included in prior park evaluations. Ownership passed to RPD throughout FY24, and each park had its first evaluation this year. For more information on how parks are added to San Francisco's park evaluation system, review *Appendix 4: How Parks Get Added to the Park Maintenance Standards Program*.





Mission Creek Park



Mission Bay Park

Mariposa Park

FIGURE 2- NEW PARKS IN 2024

Scores by Geography

Given the large number of parks throughout the City, breaking down park scores into different geographic groups can be helpful. This section reviews park scores by supervisor district and Equity Zone. The number and composition of parks in each geographic group can vary.

SUPERVISOR DISTRICT SCORE AVERAGES ARE AROUND 90%

<u>All 11 supervisor districts had average park scores above the 85% minimum goal</u>. There is no statistically significant score difference among supervisor districts. All of the average supervisor district scores are also within two percentage points of the citywide score of 91%.

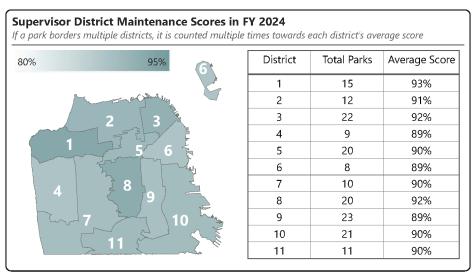


FIGURE 3 - SUPERVISOR DISTRICT MAINTENANCE SCORES IN FY24

Historically, scores by supervisor district generally trend similar to the citywide scores, as indicated in the charts in Figure 4. Most supervisor district average scores have improved since FY15 and stayed around the target score of 91% during the last three years.

District 6 is the only outlier. There is a statistically significant difference in its average park score between FY23 and FY24, increasing by seven percentage points from 82% to 89%. In FY22, the average score was 89%, so it appears that FY23 was an abnormally low year for the district.

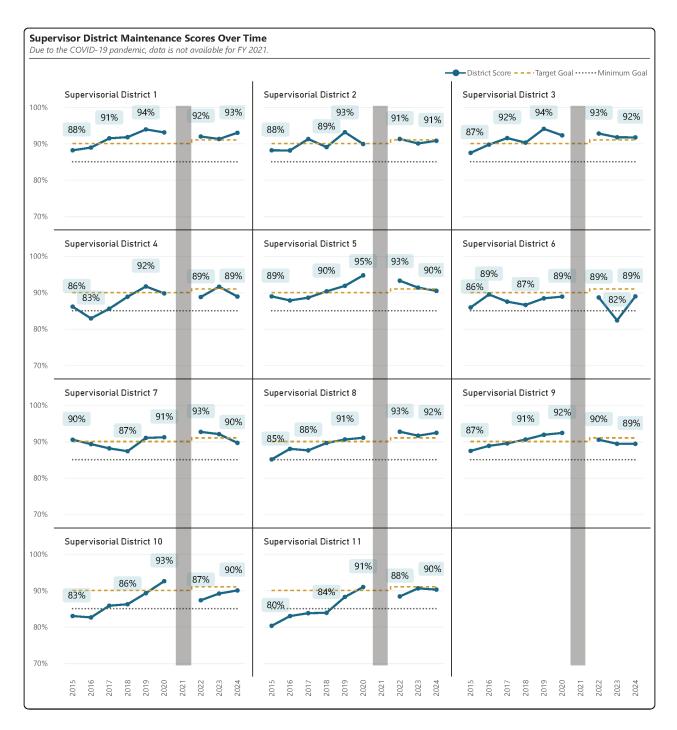


FIGURE 4 - SUPERVISOR DISTRICT MAINTENANCE SCORES OVER TIME

AVERAGE SCORES INSIDE AND OUTSIDE EQUITY ZONES ARE THE SAME

Equity Zones are neighborhoods impacted by historic environmental health risks, such as hazardous pollution. RPD defines these zones based on the <u>Environmental Justice Communities Map developed</u> by the SF Planning Department. Parks within these zones are known as "Equity Zone Parks".

While it does not undo the environmental harm the communities have experienced, RPD is committed to ensuring these communities have well-maintained parks. Reviewing the average scores for parks inside and outside of Equity Zones helps assess how well RPD meets this goal.

In FY24, 67 of the 171 parks in the Park Maintenance Standards Program were in Equity Zones. The count of <u>Equity Zone Parks</u> by neighborhood is as follows:

- Bayview: 11
- Bernal Heights: 1
- Chinatown: 3
- Crocker Amazon: 1
- Downtown/Civic Center: 6
- Excelsior: 2
- Lakeshore: 2
- Mission: 14
- Nob Hill: 1
- North Beach: 1
- Ocean View: 4

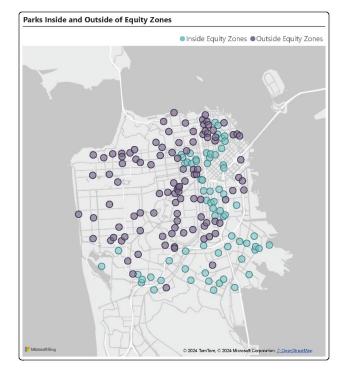


FIGURE 5 - LOCATIONS OF PARKS INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF EQUITY ZONES

- Outer Mission: 4
- Potrero Hill: 1
- Russian Hill: 1
- South of Market: 2
- Visitacion Valley: 6
- Western Addition: 7

Across the supervisor districts there are the following numbers of Equity Zone Parks:

Supervisor District	Parks inside Equity Zones	Parks outside Equity Zones
1	0	15
2	0	12
3	7	15
4	1	8
5	12	7
6	4	4
7	1	9
8	0	20
9	13	9
10	18	2
11	9	2

There is no consistent distribution of Equity Zone Parks across the supervisor districts. Districts 1, 2, and 8 have no Equity Zone Parks. In contrast, Districts 5, 9, 10, and 11 have over half of their parks in Equity Zones.

Equity and Non-Equity Zone Parks Averaged 90%

<u>Equity Zone Parks and non-Equity Zone parks</u> both had average scores of around 90% in FY24. The two groups have no statistically significant difference in average park scores.

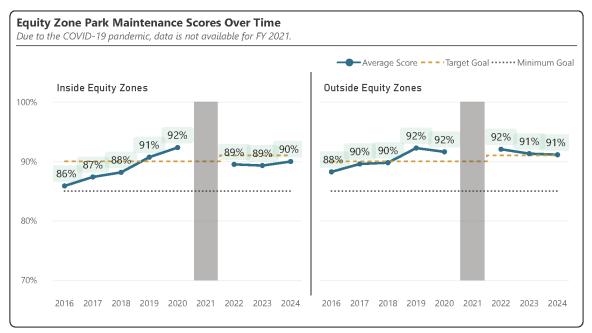


FIGURE 6 - EQUITY ZONE PARK MAINTENANCE SCORES OVER TIME

Similar to the overall park scores, scores for both Equity and Non-Equity Zones generally increased prior to COVID and have stabilized since.

Highest and lowest-scoring parks

Another way to explore the park maintenance data is by looking at the highest and lowest-scoring parks. Historically, we have reviewed the top ten and lowest ten scoring parks.⁴ Considering the location of these parks helps us see if the best or worst performing parks are concentrated in a single region of the City. We also can review the scores over time to identify any trends.

HIGHEST-SCORING PARKS CONTINUED TO SCORE WELL THIS YEAR

<u>The nine highest-scoring parks</u> in FY24 scored between 98% and 99%.⁵ The highest-scoring parks are dispersed primarily throughout Northern and Southeastern parts of the City.

⁴ Some years reviewed the highest and lowest 10% of parks.

⁵ Due to ties, we are exploring the nine highest-scoring parks and the eight lowest rather than the ten highest and lowest.

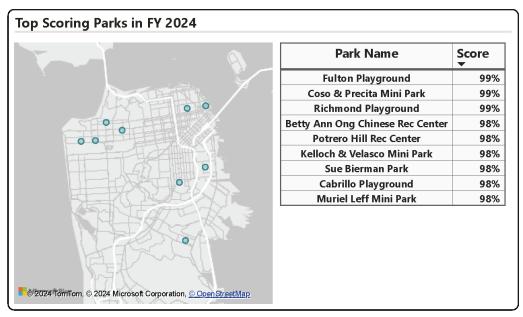


FIGURE 7 - LOCATION OF TOP SCORING PARKS IN FY24

Six of the nine highest-scoring parks are neighborhood parks or playgrounds, and the remaining are mini parks. Only one of the nine is larger than 5 acres (Potrero Hill Rec Center). A later section discusses score trends by park size, but we will continue to explore the intersection of park size and the highest-scoring parks in future years.

Park Name	Park Type	Acreage	
Coso & Precita Mini Park	Mini Park	0.	
Kelloch & Velasco Mini Park	Mini Park	2.	
Muriel Leff Mini Park	Mini Park	0.	
Betty Ann Ong Chinese Rec Center	Neighborhood Park or Playground	0.	
Cabrillo Playground	Neighborhood Park or Playground	1.	
Fulton Playground	Neighborhood Park or Playground	0.	
Potrero Hill Rec Center	Neighborhood Park or Playground	10.	
Richmond Playground	Neighborhood Park or Playground	0.	
Sue Bierman Park	Neighborhood Park or Playground	4.	

FIGURE 8 - TOP SCORING PARKS BY TYPE & ACRAGE

Most of these parks have had relatively high scores (above 85%) in past years as indicated in Figure 9. Their scores have either stayed consistent or are on a slightly upward trend.

However, Richmond Playground's scores have changed more dramatically over the years. Its score dropped from its norm of 90% or higher to 81% in 2023.

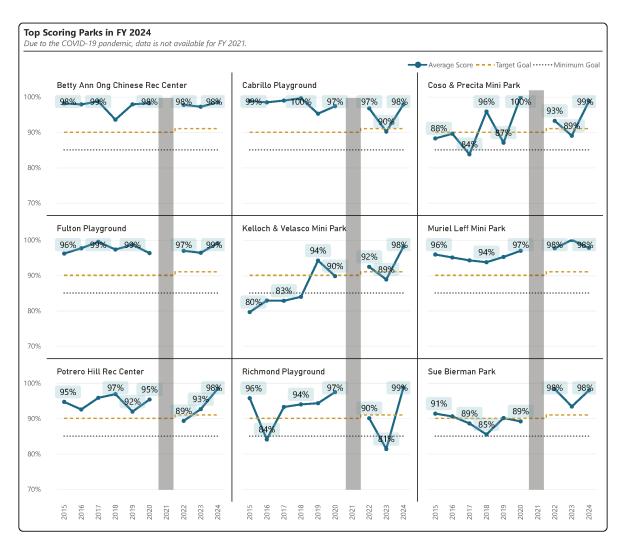


FIGURE 7 - TOP SCORING PARKS OVER TIME

The greatest number of high-scoring parks (four) are in Supervisor District 1. Only two of the highest-scoring parks, Potrero Hill Rec Center and Kelloch & Velasco Mini Park, are in Equity Zones.

Park Name	Supervisor District	Equity Zo
Cabrillo Playground	1	No
Fulton Playground	1	No
Muriel Leff Mini Park	1	No
Richmond Playground	1	No
Betty Ann Ong Chinese Rec Center	3	No
Sue Bierman Park	3	No
Coso & Precita Mini Park	9	No
Kelloch & Velasco Mini Park	10	Yes
Potrero Hill Rec Center	10	Yes

FIGURE 8 - TOP SCORING PARKS BY SUPERVISOR DISTRICT AND EQUITY ZONE

There may be a variety of factors that contribute to these parks' high scores. <u>We explored their underlying</u> <u>feature scores</u> for any areas of interest or notable change over time. Between FY23 and FY24, we found four parks had feature score increases of 15 percentage points or more. Two of them had information provided by the RPD managers that may explain these score increases:

- Coso & Precita Mini Park:
 - Lawn scores increased from 81% to 100%. The park's improved score is likely due to the completion of a nearby Department of Public Works project. The project used parts of the park as a staging area in FY23, but now the park is back to usual use.



- Potrero Hill Rec Center:
 - Dog Play Area scores increased from 85% to 100%
 - Tree scores increased from 80% to 100%. RPD planted a few additional trees in the past year.
 While having more trees do not raise the tree score, but the newer trees may be healthier and have fewer weeds in the area, potentially raising the scores.

The remaining two sites' score changes will be explored in the future to see if any trends can illuminate the reason for the change. Substantially improved feature scores on these sites include:

- Betty Ann Ong Chinese Rec Center:
 - Children Play Area scores increased from 84% to 100%
- <u>Richmond Playground</u>:
 - Children Play Area scores increased from 74% to 91%
 - Restroom scores increased from 81% to 100%
 - Table seating scores increased from 67% to 100%



LOWEST-SCORING PARKS SAW DECLINES FROM PRIOR YEARS

<u>The eight lowest-scoring parks</u> range from 69% to 80%.⁶ FY24's lowest score of 69% is slightly lower than FY23's lowest score of 71%. The lowest-scoring parks are in the Northeast, Southeast, and South of the City. This is similar to prior years.



FIGURE 9 - LOCATION OF LOWEST-SCORING PARKS IN FY24

The lowest scoring parks are primarily neighborhood parks and playgrounds, with only one mini park. The parks are all five acres or smaller.

Park Name	Park Type	Acreage				
Adam Rodgers Park	Neighborhood Park or Playground	2.7				
Aptos Playground	Neighborhood Park or Playground	5.0				
Brooks Park	Neighborhood Park or Playground	3.8				
Buchanan Street Mall	Neighborhood Park or Playground	2.0				
Kid Power Park	Neighborhood Park or Playground	0.3				
Laurel Hill Playground	Neighborhood Park or Playground	1.6				
Roosevelt & Henry Stairs	Mini Park	0.4				
Visitacion Valley Greenway	Neighborhood Park or Playground	2.4				

FIGURE 10 - LOWEST SCORING PARKS BY TYPE & ACRAGE

Most of the lowest-scoring parks had a notable decrease of at least ten percentage points from last year, as shown in Figure 13. In particular, <u>Brooks Park</u>, <u>Kid Power Park</u>, and <u>Roosevelt & Henry Stairs</u>, all declined close to 15 percentage points or more.

Most of the lowest-scoring parks scored much better in prior years. RPD managers shared that for some parks, such as Brooks Park, the scores are lower due to failing infrastructure, such as aged pathways. For other parks,

⁶ Due to ties, we are exploring the eight lowest-scoring parks rather than the ten lowest.

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such as Kid Power Park, the park is frequently maintained but faces challenges due to its proximity to the heavily used 16th Street Mission BART station. Given the traffic and community challenges nearby, Kid Power Park frequently experiences issues such as overnight break-ins.

Future evaluations will show the extent to which these are consistent trends or simply a year of poorer conditions, perhaps due to storm damage or other external factors.

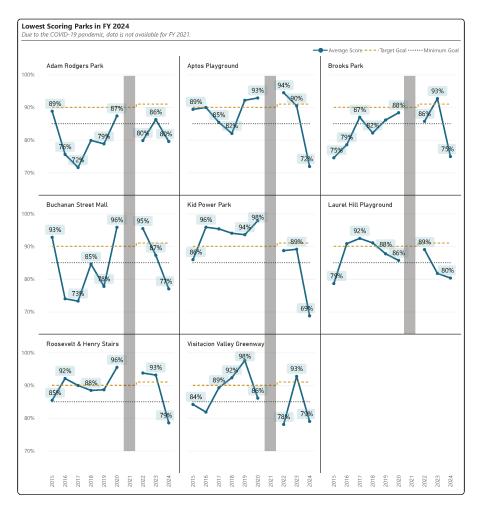


FIGURE 11 - LOWEST SCORING PARKS OVER TIME

When considering the lowest-scoring parks by supervisor district and neighborhood, there is the greatest proportion of low-scoring parks in Supervisor District 10 (two parks total). Just over half of the lowest-scoring parks are in Equity Zones, with five parks.

west Scoring Parks in FY 2024		
Park Name	Supervisor District	Equity Zon
Laurel Hill Playground	2	No
Buchanan Street Mall	5	Yes
Aptos Playground	7	No
Roosevelt & Henry Stairs	8	No
Kid Power Park	9	Yes
Adam Rodgers Park	10	Yes
Visitacion Valley Greenway	10	Yes
Brooks Park	11	Yes

FIGURE 12 - LOWEST SCORING PARKS BY SUPERVISOR DISTRICT AND EQUITY ZONE

In exploring the reasons behind these low scores, we examined the underlying park feature scores. In general, parks saw low and often declining scores across most features. None of the lowest-scoring parks have a Dog Play Area. We will continue to review future low-scoring parks to see if this becomes a trend.

Further, we will continue exploring potential trends around these high and low-scoring parks. Given the major drop in park scores for this year's lowest-scoring parks, we will continue to track both these specific parks and the lowest-scoring parks over time.

BOND FUNDING AND OTHER PARTNERSHIPS CAN HELP IMPROVE PARKS

Bond funding helps San Francisco improve its parks through capital repairs and other capital projects.⁷ Park improvements through bonds may include renovations, which improve existing features, or additions, which may add in new features. Either could improve scores, as a renovation is likely to upgrade a poorly-scoring feature, and an addition adds in a new feature that is likely to score highly. RPD previously improved a few parks under the bond program: Cabrillo Playground and Fulton Playground under the 2008 bond program, and Potrero Hill under the 2012 bond program. RPD completed the renovation of Fulton Playground in FY13, Cabrillo Playground in FY14, and Potrero Hill in FY20.

While some of the bonds target specific parks, others provide more general funding. For example, the Let's Play SF! Funding did not denote specific parks in the bond funding. Instead, RPD created a Citizen Task Force to identify playgrounds that were in the most need of support. Building on this effort, RPD partnered with the San Francisco Parks Alliance to bring in additional funding.⁸ We may continue to see the impacts of the various funding sources for capital improvements over the years to come.

Park Groups

PARK TYPE HAD NO IMPACT ON AVERAGE SCORES

Another way to explore categories of park scores is by park types. In FY24, RPD and CON evaluated a total of 171 parks, made up of 116 neighborhood parks, 35 mini parks, 10 civic plazas, eight regional parks, and two parkways. In FY24, <u>all park types had average scores</u> above 85%.

Fiscal Year	20/	23	2024	
Park Type	Average Score	Total Parks	Average Score	Total Parks
Civic Plaza	90%	10	90%	10
Mini Park	92%	34	92%	35
Neighborhood Park	90%	114	91%	116
Parkway	87%	2	86%	2
Regional Park	91%	8	89%	8
		_		

FIGURE 13 - PARK TYPE MAINTENANCE SCORES IN FY24

 $^{^{7}}$ For more information about bonds, see Appendix 2.

⁸ For more information, visit the Let'sPlaySF website.

From FY23 and FY24, there is no statistically significant difference in average scores among park types.

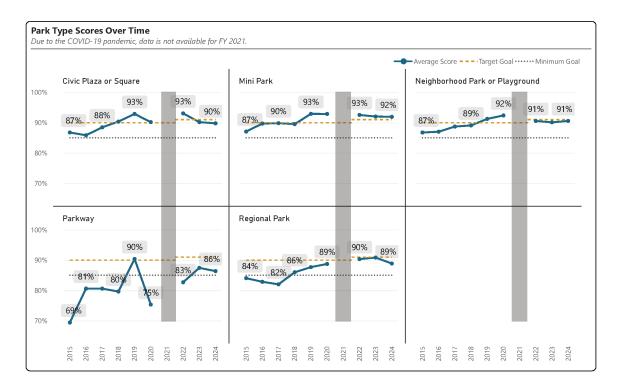


FIGURE 14 - PARK TYPE SCORES OVER TIME

PARK SIZE HAD NO IMPACT ON AVERAGE SCORES

FY24's average park size is 18 acres. When excluding the outlier of Golden Gate Park (1,000+ acres), the average is 14 acres. There are 65 parks (38%) under 1 acre, and 106 parks (62%) are one acre or larger. For comparison, a standard American football field is about 1.3 acres.

We group parks by sizes:

- Greater than 5 acres
- 1 to 5 acres
- 0.25 to 1 acre
- Less than 0.25 acres

There are 47 parks larger than 5 acres, 58 between 1 and 5 acres, 42 between 0.25 and 1 acres, and 24 under 0.25 acres. Unlike the park types, there is a more even distribution of park sizes across the system.

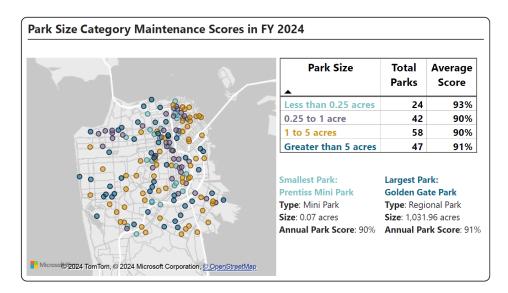


FIGURE 15 - PARK SIZE MAINTENANCE SCORES IN FY24

<u>All park size groups had average scores</u> at or above 90% in FY24. There is no statistically significant difference between the average scores in park size groups. Scores for each group also saw no statistically significant change from FY23 to FY24.

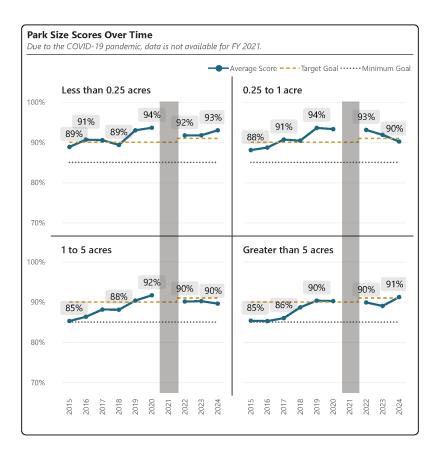


FIGURE 16 - PARK SIZE SCORES OVER TIME

Citywide Feature Scores

FEATURE SCORES OVERVIEW

RPD and CON evaluate each park based on the unique combination of features located at its site. Sites may have any number of the following features:

- Features that occupy specific, discrete locations within a park
 - o Athletic Fields
 - Outdoor Courts
 - o Buildings & General Amenities
 - o Restrooms
 - Table Seating Areas
 - Children's Play Areas (CPAs)
 - Dog Play Areas (DPAs)
- Features that are geographically dispersed throughout a park
 - o Greenspace
 - Hardscape
 - o Lawns
 - Ornamental Beds
 - o Trees

Each feature has a different number of elements that make up its score⁹. There also are a different number of features in each park. It is more useful to explore the scores within a specific feature rather than across features, as the features cannot be consistently compared.

Feature Scores Remain Similar to Last Year

<u>Most citywide feature average scores</u> remained the same from FY23 to FY24, as shown in Figure 19. Athletic fields and Children's Play Areas are the only features that showed a statistically significant change, improving from 84% to 88% for Athletic Fields and 83% to 85% for Children's Play Areas.

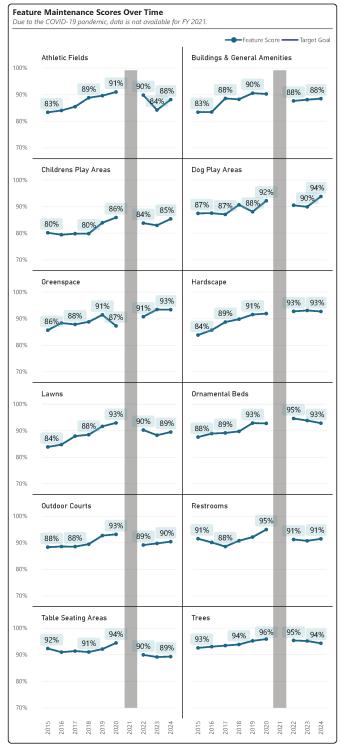


FIGURE 17 - CITYWIDE FEATURE SCORES OVER TIME

⁹ See Figure 23 in Appendix 3 for a table of the different features that an element appears in.

Similar to the citywide scores, feature average scores have largely shown a gradual increase from FY15 to today. Unlike the park scores, individual feature scores do not have any minimum scores or specific targets.

SPECIFIC FEATURES OF INTEREST

We highlight four park features that often interest the public: Athletic Fields, Children's Play Areas, Dog Play Areas, and Outdoor Courts. All of these are "active features" meaning that they are physically used by park visitors. As mentioned above, Athletic Fields and Children's Play Areas are the only features that had a statistically significant change in the past year.

Athletic Fields

Athletic Fields saw a statistically significant improvement in its average scores from FY23, rising from 84% to 88%. The biggest improvement in its component elements is the Paint and Equipment scores.

- Average paint scores improved from 80% to 84% in the past fiscal year.
- Average equipment scores improved from 86% to 89%.

RPD completed minor rehabilitation projects for the Athletic Fields of 11 parks, which likely contributed to the overall feature score improvement. These parks include:

- Carl Larsen Park
- Junipero Serra Playground
- Crocker Amazon Playground
- Balboa Park
- Moscone Rec Center
- Sunset Rec Center
- West Sunset Playground
- George Chrisopher Playground
- Golden Gate Park Section Seven
- Glen Canyon Park
- Presidio Wall Playground



While these parks had improvements to their Athletic Fields, none of the parks scored among the top ten parks in FY24. To explore more details about these parks, use the <u>park lookup tool</u>.

Children's Play Areas



Lincoln Park

Average scores for Children's Play Areas (CPAs) saw a statistically significant difference from last year, reaching 85%. CPAs saw improvements in three main element areas:

- Average graffiti scores increased (meaning less graffiti found) by five percentage points, reaching 83%
- Average structure scores are up five percentage points from last year to reach 83%.
- Average surface scores are up four percentage points from last year, reaching 64%.

Dog Play Areas

Average citywide scores for Dog Play Areas improved four percentage points in the past year, from 90% to 94%. However, this is not a statistically significant change. The key contributing elements are:

- DPA's average seating element score increased by four percentage points, reaching 97%.
- Signage element average scores increased by six percentage points to reach 95%.
- However, graffiti element average scores saw a decline of five percentage points, dropping to 83%.



Channel Street Dog Park at Mission Bay

Outdoor Courts

Outdoor Courts are spaces for sports such as tennis, pickleball, or basketball. The average scores for Outdoor Courts remained the same as last year, at 90%. The average element scores all remained relatively similar. The elements either had no change or only increased or decreased by one to three percentage points.

Element Scores

GRAFFITI AND CLEANLINESS REMAINED THE SAME AS LAST YEAR

Features are made up of elements.¹⁰ Each feature has a different combination of elements. Some elements occur more often than others. Graffiti and cleanliness are two elements that are common across most park features. We highlight these two elements due to their visibility to park visitors.

<u>Citywide graffiti element scores</u> in FY24 remain similar to FY23 scores. Scores average 88% across the City, meaning that on average, 88% of the places in parks where evaluators checked were graffiti free. This does not mean that there are not people graffitiing. It means that in each park either limited instances of graffiti were observed or most graffiti were cleaned up.

Trees were least likely to see graffiti (scoring 96%) and Building & General Amenities were most likely (scoring 78%).

Cleanliness, which assesses how free of litter parks are, is performing well. For FY24, cleanliness scores averaged 94%. This high score may be due to few people leaving messes behind or RPD effectively cleaning up litter and other messes.

Only Dog Play Areas have a top cleanliness issue other than litter, where it is instances of dog feces or feces-filled bags. Buildings and General Amenities and Tress had the least litter or messes (scoring 97% and 96%, respectively). Across each feature, none had a cleanliness score below 88%.

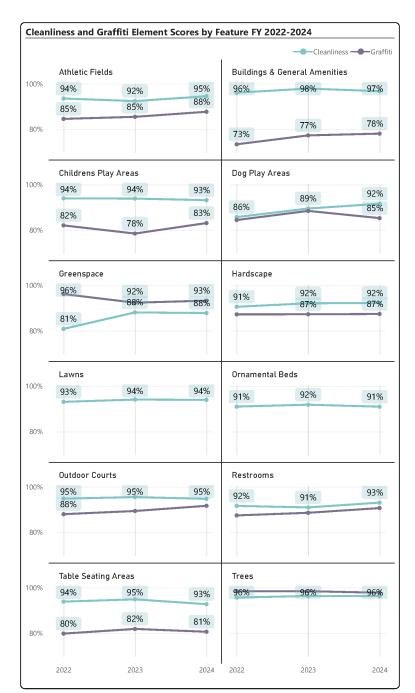


FIGURE 18 - CITYWIDE ELEMENT SCORES BY FEATURE, FY22-FY24

¹⁰ See Figure 23 in Appendix 3 for a table of the different features that an element appears in.

Conclusions and Next Steps

Based on the analysis, CON can conclude that RPD continues to meet its goal of providing high-quality parks to all San Francisco residents. The citywide park score is 91%, consistent with recent years.

There are few statistically significant differences among different groups. We see no statistically significant difference across average Supervisor district scores. There also are no statistically significant differences in average scores between parks in Equity Zones and those outside of them. The average score for both groups is around 90%. Average scores were consistent by Park Type and by Park Size.

The highest scoring parks have historically scored well, but the many of the lowest scoring parks had an unusual drop this year. Future monitoring will assess for any new trends.

The report highlights four park features that tend to interest park visitors: Children's Play Areas, Dog Play Areas, Outdoor Courts, and Athletic Fields. Athletic Field scores improved from 84% to 88% over the past year, possibly due to renovations to 11 Athletic Fields across the system. Children's Play Areas improved from 83% to 85%. The other features remained the same as last year.

The report also highlights two park elements that interest park visitors: Cleanliness and Graffiti. The average scores for both elements remained the same as last year. Cleanliness saw an average score of 94% and Graffiti 88%.

In the upcoming years, the Controller's Office will continue to produce annual reports and plans to conduct further analysis on the available data. We also hope to provide more frequent reporting, such as quarterly. These more frequent updates could help RPD inform operations or support the public to have a deeper understanding of the park maintenance efforts.

Appendix 1: Statistical Testing

Where possible, we conducted tests for statistical significance. The test provides a degree of mathematical certainty if the difference between the two averages is due to chance. If the difference is due to chance, the difference is not meaningful and could be ignored. We discuss the findings of these tests in the report where applicable.

When not statistically significant, we may still present the scores across various groups, but the differences between them should not be considered as important. Instead, we are presenting the range of scores to help readers understand where those groups fall.

We conducted paired T-tests to determine differences between two year's scores, unpaired T-tests for differences between categories with two groups, and ANOVA tests for differences between categories with three or more groups. We used p<0.05 for significance.

Appendix 2: Scoring Methodology

This section provides an overview of park maintenance score calculation. For a more thorough understanding, review the <u>Park Standards Methodology Explainer</u>.

At the most granular level, 200+ <u>Park Maintenance Standards</u> are assessed as either "Pass" or "Fail." For example, is a lamppost broken or is there litter on the ground? Similar *Standards* are categorized into common maintenance issues called **Elements** (such as Cleanliness, Equipment, or Lighting). Every park has **Features**, which are the amenities at parks that residents use or enjoy (like Athletic Fields, Restrooms, or Dog Play Areas). Each feature contains at least one element.

For example, the mowing element for athletic fields requires that the turf be less than 4.5 inches high. If an evaluator finds that a certain turf area is taller than 4.5 inches, the athletic field in question will fail to meet the mowing element. The elements and associated criteria that make up an evaluation cover a wide range of topics, including graffiti, paint, fencing, litter, plant condition, hardscape surface quality, and many more. Feature scores make up each park's maintenance score, which is aggregated to create the citywide average score.

In many cases, multiple instances of a feature exist at a park. For example, many parks have multiple restrooms, courts, or athletic fields, each of which are evaluated separately. Scores are then aggregated to calculate the scores for that feature at that park.

For ease of evaluation, several very large parks are subdivided into smaller evaluation sites. For example, Golden Gate Park is broken up into 38 sites.

An evaluator will check every applicable <u>Standard</u> for each Feature in a park. If a Standard fails inspection (e.g., a Lawn has too many gopher holes), then its entire Element (e.g., Turf Maintenance) would fail too. An Element can only pass if all its underlying Standards pass. If there are multiple **Instances** of a Feature (such as a basketball and tennis court—both part of the Outdoor Courts Feature), have their passing Elements summed together and are divided against their summed total Elements (which include the failing ones, too). An overall Feature score is calculated this way. Each Feature score is averaged together to create a **Park** score. Or if the

park is too large for a single evaluator to assess, it is first broken down into smaller, more manageable **Sites** before getting rolled up to a *Park* score. The average of all *Park* scores together creates the **Citywide** score.

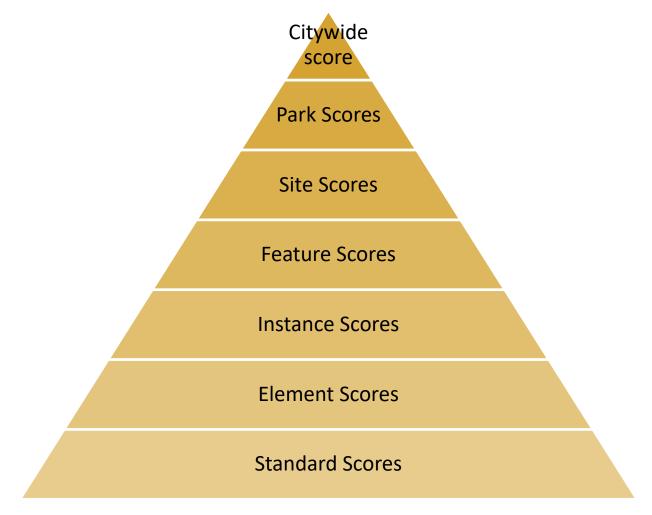


FIGURE 19 - PARK MAINTENANCE SCORING HIERACHY

CON and RPD strive to evaluate all the active parks once every three months ("quarterly"). Park scores are reported as annual averages, so each quarter's *Feature, Park, Citywide,* etc. scores get averaged by each quarter to make up the annual scores.

Parks may fail certain evaluation criteria due to standard maintenance issues or issues from deferred capital repairs. Deferred capital repairs, which can include things like major cracks in surfaces, could impact the overall park maintenance. These deferred repairs require more careful planning and budgeting. RPD maintenance team generally are unable to fix them quickly. As such, they are more likely to lead to repeated failures over multiple quarters.

Here is an example of a fictitious park site score calculation:

Maintenance Standard		uation esult	Element Score	Feature Score	Park Score		
Hazardous litter	Pass	→	Cleanliness				
Large, abandoned item	Fail	→	0 points →	Greenspace			
Plants intrude on path	Pass	→	Pruning	1/2 points = 50%			
Plants obstruct signage	Pass	→	1 point →	7			
Bulging chain link	Pass	→		Buildings &			
Sharp fence edge	Pass	→	Fencing	Amenities			
Gate cannot open	Pass	→	- 1 point →	1/1 point = 100% →			
Pool of standing water	Fail	>	Drainage 0 points →		(50% + 100% +		
Feces or bagged feces	Pass	→	Cleanliness	Dog Play Areas	33% + 67%) / 4 = 63%		
Large spot of litter	Fail	>	0 points →	1/3 points = 33%	- 03 /0		
Broken dog bag dispenser	Pass	→	Equipment 1 point→				
Light source is too dark	Pass	→	Lighting				
Light source is broken	Pass	→	1 point →				
Chipping wall paint	Pass	→	Paint	Restrooms			
Paint touch-up colors do not match	Pass	→	1 point →	2/3 points = 67%			
Gender or hours sign not posted	Fail	>	Signage				
Sign text is illegible	Fail	>	0 points →				

Park Maintenance Scoring Fictitious Example

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.

FIGURE 20 - PARK MAINTENANCE SCORING EXAMPLE

Elements are only present under certain features. Further, not all features are present at each park. A matrix of the elements included in the respective features (if present at the park) is shown below:

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Elements (below) Features (right)	Athletic Fields	Buildings & General Amenities	Children's Play Areas	Dog Play Areas	Greenspace	Hardscape	Lawns	Ornamental Beds	Outdoor Courts	Restrooms	Table Seating Areas	Trees
Cleanliness	\checkmark	Ameniues		$\mathbf{\nabla}$			$\mathbf{\nabla}$		\checkmark		\checkmark	
Curbs												
Drainage	N			N			\mathbf{Y}		Y			
Drinking												
Equipment	$\mathbf{\nabla}$			\checkmark					\checkmark	$\mathbf{\nabla}$		
Fencing	\mathbf{N}		\checkmark	N					N			
Freestanding												
Graffiti	$\mathbf{\Sigma}$		\checkmark	N		$\boldsymbol{\bigtriangledown}$			V	$\mathbf{\nabla}$	\mathbf{N}	\checkmark
Grills											N	
Lighting										N		
Misc		$\mathbf{\nabla}$										
No mow								$\mathbf{\nabla}$				
Paint	N								Y		\mathbf{N}	
Parking												
Paths												
Plants								\checkmark				
Pruning								$\boldsymbol{\bigtriangledown}$				\checkmark
Roads												
Sand			$\mathbf{\nabla}$									
Seating	$\mathbf{\nabla}$			\mathbf{V}					$\mathbf{\mathbf{V}}$		$\mathbf{\nabla}$	
Signage	$\mathbf{\nabla}$		\checkmark	\mathbf{Y}					\mathbf{Y}	$\mathbf{\nabla}$		
Stairways												
Structures	$\mathbf{\nabla}$								\mathbf{Y}			
Supplies												
Surface	$\mathbf{\nabla}$			V			$\mathbf{\nabla}$		V			
Tree condition												\checkmark
Turf	$\mathbf{\nabla}$						V					
Walkway						\checkmark						
Waste												
Water												
Weeds	$\mathbf{\Sigma}$		\checkmark			\checkmark		$\mathbf{\nabla}$	\mathbf{Y}			\checkmark

FIGURE 21 - FEATURES (COLUMNS) AND THEIR UNDERLYING ELEMENT COMPONENTS (ROWS)

Appendix 3: Park Maintenance Funding Sources

Proposition B (June 2016)

Through the passage of Proposition J in 1975, San Francisco voters established the Open Space Acquisition and Park Renovation Program, requiring that a portion of the City's property tax revenue be set aside each year to enhance the City's ability to acquire open space, and to develop and maintain recreational facilities. Over the years this program has been extended and expanded, and the current Park, Recreation, and Open Space Fund (Fund) now supports a vast array of services including property acquisition, after-school recreation programs, urban forestry, community gardens, volunteer programs, and natural area management.

With the passage of Proposition B in June 2016, voters again extended the Fund through 2046 and required the City to allocate to it a minimum amount from the City's General Fund each year starting in FY17. The department is working to balance the baseline funding among existing operational costs, inflationary increases and other uses. The goal is to carefully reallocate funding to help improve parks and park features that rank low in these evaluations due to deferred maintenance or other issues.

RPD has a history of prioritizing the maintenance of existing parks and facilities in the strategic plans, including: developing and posting annual park maintenance objectives for all RPD parks; and prioritizing deferred maintenance renewals and discretionary capital resources in equity zone parks with failing park scores.¹¹ The <u>2023-2027 update to the plan</u> builds on this work, aiming to keep parks safe, clean, and fun as well as building the great parks of tomorrow.

Bond Funding for Park Improvements

In 2008, voters approved a \$185 million general obligation bond, known as the 2008 Clean and Safe Neighborhood Parks Bond. Among other objectives, the purpose of the bond was to improve park restrooms citywide, renovate parks and playgrounds in poor physical condition, and replace dilapidated play fields. Most of the park improvements funded by the bond were completed by 2014, though construction on a few parks stretched into 2015 and 2016. The following parks were included in the 2008 Bond:

- Cabrillo Playground
- Cayuga Playground
- Chinese Recreation Center
- Fulton Playground
- Glen Canyon Park
- Lafayette Park

- McCoppin Square
- Mission Dolores Park
- Mission Playground
- Palega Recreation Center
- Raymond Kimbell Playground
- Sunset Playground

In 2012, voters again passed a \$195 million general obligation bond aimed at capital repairs for park improvement, known as the 2012 Clean and Safe Neighborhood Parks Bond. This bond continued investment in park infrastructure and most funds were specifically allocated to neighborhood park improvement. Of the

¹¹ References from the 2019-2023 Update to the Strategic Plan and the 2020-2024 Update to the Strategic Plan.

15 neighborhood parks chosen for improvements, all 15 were completed and open to the public as of May 2024. The following parks were included in the 2012 Bond:

- Angelo J Rossi Playground
- Balboa Park
- Garfield Square
- George Christopher Playground
- Gilman Playground
- Glen Canyon Park
- Golden Gate Park
- Hyde & Turk Mini Park
- Joe DiMaggio Playground

- John McLaren Park
- Lake Merced Park
- Margaret S Hayward Playground
- Moscone Rec Center
- Mountain Lake Park
- Potrero Hill Rec Center
- South Park
- West Sunset Playground
- Willie "Woo Woo" Wong Playground

In 2020, voters passed the Health and Recovery Bond, which includes \$239 million for park improvements. The bond also includes funding for treatment and supportive housing for people experiencing homelessness and with mental health needs, as well as funding for street and pedestrian improvements. This bond will support improvements to the following parks:

- Buchanan Street Mall
- Gene Friend Recreation Center
- Hertz Playground
- India Basin
- Japantown Peace Plaza

- Buena Vista
- Jackson Playground
- Portsmouth Square
- South Sunset Clubhouse

While the planning and some initial work has begun, none of the 2020 bond projects are complete. They will be monitored and discussed in future annual reports.

Appendix 4: How Parks are Added to the Park Maintenance Standards Program

The RPD Asset Management Unit (AMU) manages the Park Maintenance Standards Program for RPD. Parkspecific data must be collected and entered into various AMU software systems and all necessary for a park to be a part of the evaluation.

AMU staff typically tours a brand-new park, meeting the site staff for an orientation. On site, GIS staff use specialized equipment to collect spatial data such as type, location and boundaries of park features and enter this information into the GIS database For a small park the GIS data entry might take a few hours; for larger parks, it can take several days to weeks.

From there, the park information is entered into the work order system, called the TMA. TMA staff that maintain the system review the work of the GIS staff to understand what new facilities and areas need to be created in TMA. A park property contains facilities, such as buildings, turf (a landscaped type) or volleyball courts (a hardscape type). These facilities, in turn, contain areas. A building might contain offices, restrooms, showers, a gym, closets, hallways and so on. Outdoor facilities, such as a landscaped area, may contain turf, paths, planted

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beds and various public amenities such as drinking fountains and benches. The work of the GIS staff eventually produces a map, and the work of TMA staff produces a catalog of all assets present at a property.

Once confirmed as correct and the new park records are in GIS, AMU transfers the data from the general GIS database to 311 and to the Park Evaluations GIS database. Then AMU reconfigures the data to match our Park Evaluations data structure and allows it to be assigned for a new evaluation. the site is "on-line" and will be included in the next round of assignments that are sent out to our evaluators.

Courtesy of RPD's Asset Management Unit (AMU)

Additional Information

The following sections present information not covered in the report. These may be of most use for RPD internal purposes or readers of prior evaluation reports. This section includes:

- Park Service Area (PSA) Scores
- Site Scores
- FY24 Evaluations By the Numbers
- Trust for Public Land Ranking
- Additional Resources and Links

PARK SERVICE AREA (PSA) SCORES

RPD uses Park Service Areas (PSAs) to break the City's parks into administrative sections. While examining the PSA scores may not be the most relevant to the average San Francisco resident, this could be useful information for the RPD operation team.

When considering by PSA, all groups scored above the minimum goal of 85%. There is no statistically significant difference between the PSA scores. All scored close to 90%.

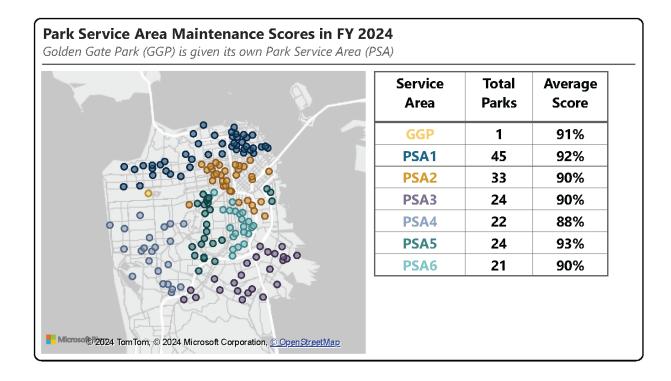


FIGURE 22 - PARK SERVICE AREA SCORES IN FY24

In general, scores did not change substantially in the past fiscal year. PSA4 is the only PSA that saw a statistically significant change, decreasing from 92% to 88%.

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PSA4 had two parks that declined by 18 percentage points. These include Aptos Playground (dropping from 90% to 72%) and Brooks Park (dropping from 93% to 75%). Several other parks declined by seven to 13 percentage points, including McCoppin Square, Minne and Lovie Rec Center, and the Sunset Rec Center. While a few parks increased their scores, none were as substantial as these declines.

The PSA manager shared that several of the issues in PSA4 can be tied to aging infrastructure. Issues such as hardscape, outdoor courts, pathways, lighting, and Children's Play Area surfaces require Capital Project repairs to address. Fortunately, approval and funding are in process for many of these parks.

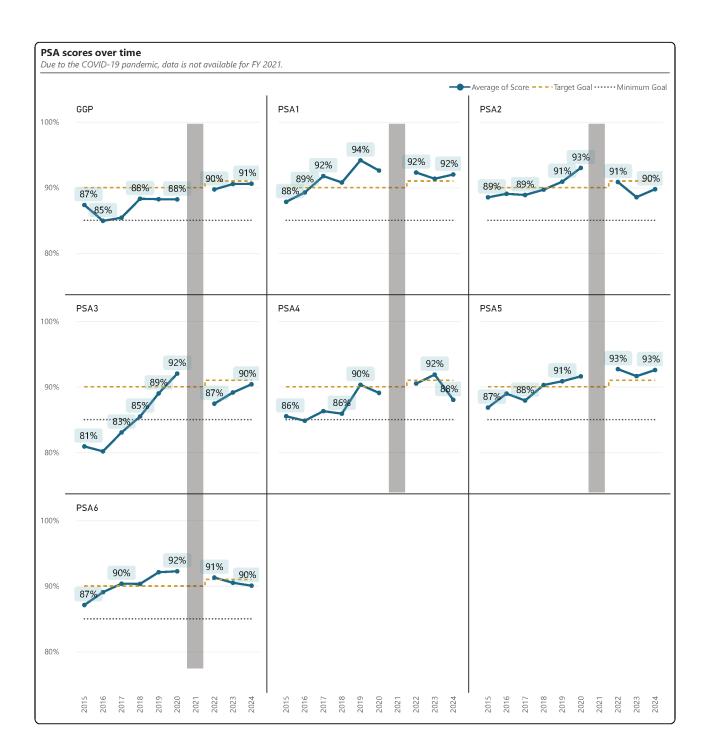


FIGURE 23 - PARK SERVICE AREA SCORES OVER TIME

SITE SCORES

Sites are the key component of parks. For smaller parks, the site is the same as the park. For larger parks, such as Golden Gate Park or John McClaren Park, it may be broken into two or more sites for ease of evaluation. By looking at site scores, rather than just park scores, we can learn more about the maintenance of our parks at a smaller geographic level.

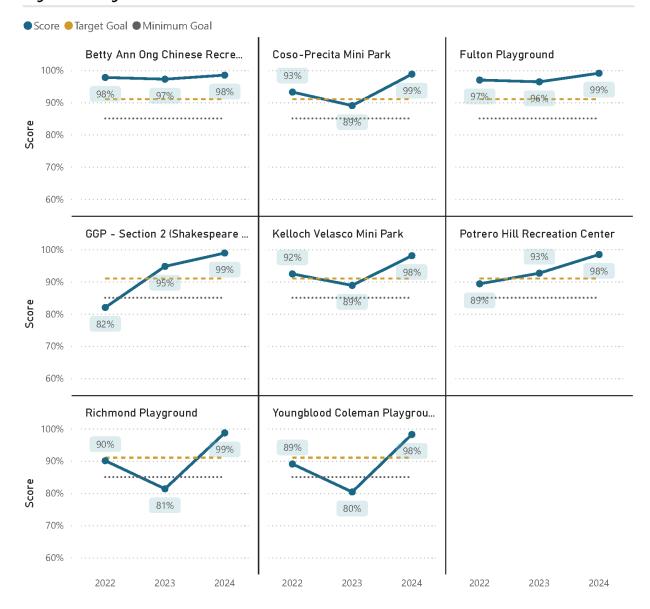
Among the eight highest-scoring sites, only two are one of multiple sites in their park, compared to four of the eight lowest-scoring sites (see highlighted sites below). For these parks with multiple sites, lower-scoring sites may drive down a park score.

Highest Scoring Sites	Score	Lowest Scoring Sites	Score ▲
Kelloch Velasco Mini Park	98%	Kid Power Park	69%
Youngblood Coleman Playground (East)	98%	Aptos Playground	72%
Potrero Hill Recreation Center	98%	GGP - Section 6 (Beach Chalet)	73%
Betty Ann Ong Chinese Recreation Center	98%	John McLaren Park (Sunnydale-Persia)	75%
Richmond Playground	99%	Brooks Park	75%
Coso-Precita Mini Park	99%	Lake Merced (South Lake)	76%
GGP - Section 2 (Shakespeare Garden)	99%	GGP - Section 6 (South Lake)	76%
Fulton Playground	99%	Buchanan Street Mall	77%

FIGURE 24 - SITE SCORES IN FY24

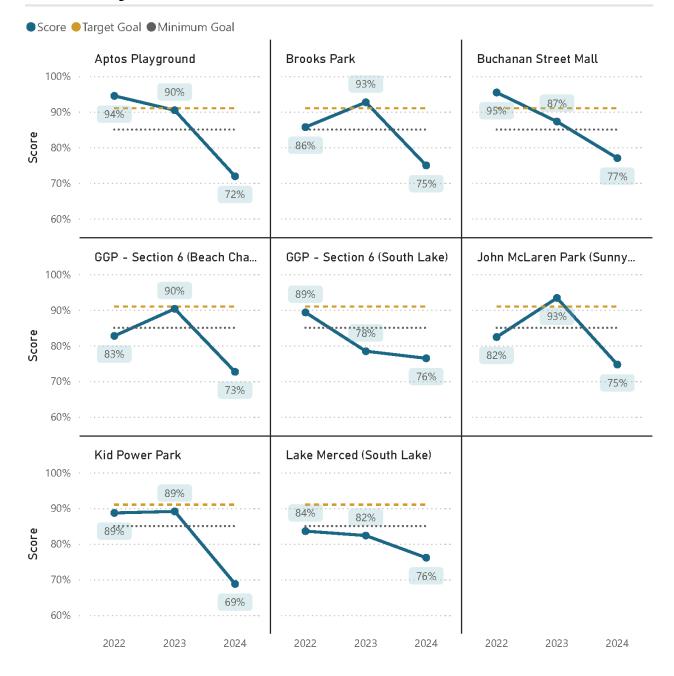
Most of the highest-scoring sites have generally been performing well since 2022. However, Richmond Playground and Youngblood Coleman Playground (East) saw the greatest increase of 18 percentage points each.

In contrast, the lowest-scoring sites performed better in FY22 and FY23. For all but Lake Merced (South Lake), they were above the minimum goal of 85% in prior years. This indicates something unique about FY24 for these sites that led to the drop in scores. Time will help to demonstrate if these are park maintenance issues or due to weather or other external factors.



Highest Scoring Sites in FY 2024 Over Time

FIGURE 25 - HIGHEST SCORING SITES OVER TIME



Lowest Scoring Sites in FY 2024 Over Time

FIGURE 26 - LOWEST SCORING SITES OVER TIME

FY24 EVALUATIONS BY THE NUMBERS

There are <u>295 unique park maintenance standards</u> that evaluators use to assess the City's parks. Each park is evaluated using the standards relevant to the specific park. For example, Children's Play Area standards are included in a park's evaluation only if the park has a Children's Play Area.

In FY24, these standards were assessed via **764 site evaluations** conducted across **171 parks**! All these observations and measurements go into one **citywide score**. The chart below shows the number of site evaluations REC and CON conducted each quarter:



FIGURE 27 - NUMBER OF SITE EVALUATIONS COMPLETED IN FY24

Park scores are a snapshot in time. While the four evaluations per site per year are intended to create an overall reflection, there are some limitations that cannot be avoided. Park scores may change from year to year due to differences in evaluators, construction projects, weather, and the month, day, or time each quarterly evaluation is completed.

TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND RANKING

The Trust for Public Land is a national nonprofit that creates parks and protects land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come. The organization works alongside communities across the country to create, protect, and steward quality parks and green spaces that are vital to human well-being.

As part of this effort, it maintains an annual ranking of cities' park systems through the <u>ParkScore program</u>. The ParkScore program helps policymakers, community organizers, and City planners to understand their local park system's assets and areas for improvement. While the Park Maintenance Standards Annual Report measures San Francisco's overall park maintenance, the <u>Trust for Public Land's ParkScore provides a distinct</u> <u>measure of San Francisco's</u> overall park quality based on five categories:

- 1. Access: the percentage of a City's residents that live within a 10-minute walk of a park.
- 2. Acreage: the proximity of large "destination" parks that provide health and environmental benefits.
- 3. Amenities: the availability of activities that are popular across a wide range of diverse user groups.
- 4. Equity: the distribution of parks evenly between neighborhoods regardless of race or income.
- 5. Investment: the assessment of a park system's financial health as measured by total spending.

In FY24, San Francisco was ranked 7th in the nation based on a ParkScore of 76.5%. This is the second year that TPL's scoring placed San Francisco at 7th. In particular, the City scored 100 points out of the maximum 100 in the Access and Investment categories.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND LINKS

All information presented in this report is 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

• Park Maintenance Evaluation Website

Evaluation Datasets on the OpenData Portal

- <u>Annual Park Evaluation Scores, 2015-2024</u> (scores calculated using the current methodology)
- <u>Annual Park Evaluation Scores, 2005-2014</u> (scores calculated using an older methodology)

Park Evaluation and Related Reports

- <u>CON Park Maintenance Program</u>
- <u>CON Citizen Survey Park Ratings</u>
- <u>RPD Strategic Plan, 2022-207 Update</u>
- Environmental Justice Communities Framework

Park Maintenance Standards

- RPD Park Maintenance Standards
- <u>RPD Park Maintenance Scores Website</u>
- <u>CON Park Standards Methodology Explainer</u>

RPD Strategic Plan

• RPD Strategic Plan 2023-2027 Update