Park Maintenance Standards

Selected Highlights | FY2022-23



About the Controller's Office

The Controller serves as the chief accounting officer and auditor for the City and County of San Francisco. We are responsible for governance and conduct of key aspects of the City's financial operations, including:

- Operating the City's financial systems and issuing its financial procedures.
- Maintaining the City's internal control environment.
- Processing payroll for City employees.
- Managing the City's bonds and debt portfolio.
- Processing and monitoring the City's budget.

We conduct audits and produce regular reports on the City's financial and economic condition and the operations and performance of City government.

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.

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About the Report

Under an amendment approved by voters in 2003, <u>Appendix F</u> 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 (REC) to establish objective and measurable <u>park maintenance standards</u>, and to assess the extent to which the City's parks meet those standards on an annual basis. This report and its more comprehensive and interactive <u>online dashboard</u> fulfill F1.102.(a).(1)-(2) of the mandate.

This report highlights some of the results of 732 evaluations conducted by both RPD and CON during fiscal year 2022-2023 (FY23), from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023. Historical data and trends are also included, except in FY20 Q4 and all of FY21, when RPD and CON suspended evaluations due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

For more information, please visit our <u>program website</u>, and the comprehensive and interactive <u>San Francisco</u> Park Maintenance Scores online dashboard.

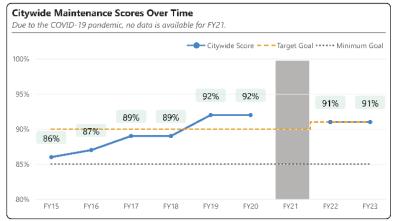
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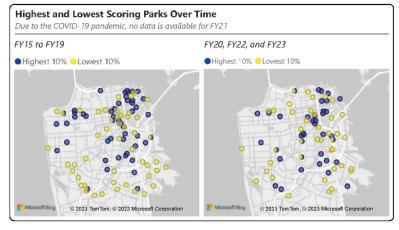
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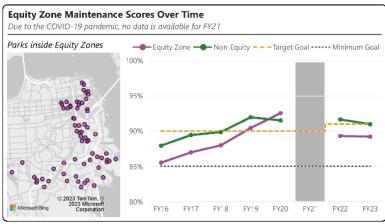
1. Executive Summary

Recreation and Parks Department (RPD) and the Controller's Office (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 assessed by observing how many of its maintenance standards are successfully met – 100% means ALL its standards are met. The citywide park maintenance score is a simple average of all the park's annualized maintenance scores (which themselves are averages of quarterly evaluations). RPD has established a minimum standard score of 85% and a performance target score of 91% during fiscal year 2022-2023 (FY23), from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023. **The citywide park maintenance score was 91% in FY23, unchanged from FY22, which meets RPD's performance goal for the fiscal year**. The citywide score has steadily risen since FY15, when the program's current methodology was adopted.

- The citywide score was 91% in FY23, unchanged from FY22.
- Since FY15, the citywide score has increased steadily each year from 86% and peaked at 92% in FY20.
- The citywide average score met its target goal for the 4th year. In FY22, the target goal rose from 90% to 91% to reflect recent performance.
- From FY15 to FY19, San Francisco's highestscoring parks were concentrated in the northern part of the City. In contrast, its lowest-scoring parks were concentrated in the south and east. FY20 to FY23 saw this trend somewhat reversed, with more even distribution of high- and low-scoring parks across the city.
- Parks in Equity Zones—communities negatively impacted by environmental health risks—scored an average of 89% in FY23, unchanged from FY22.
- Non-Equity Zone parks scored an average of 91% in FY23, down one percentage point from FY22.







2. Introduction

Background

The Controller's Office (CON) works closely 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 200+ 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 16th annual park maintenance standards report based on the results of evaluations from FY23.

This report contains selected highlights from the <u>Park Maintenance Scores Dashboard</u>. The highlights presented in this report are based on evaluations of RPD properties conducted by RPD and CON staff over 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 is aggregated to make up the citywide average score. For more information on how scores are calculated, see the *Park Maintenance Scoring Methodology* section in the Appendix.

Report Content

The primary purpose of this report 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 the Mayor's Budget Book and the Controller's Office Annual Performance Results and City Scorecards. A secondary purpose of the report and dashboard is to present the public with the latest park maintenance data trends and evaluations.

This report is comprised of five sections:

- Citywide Scores (performance of the park system broadly)
- Park Scores by Selected Geography (park maintenance averaged by specific boundaries)
- Park Scores by Selected Characteristic (notable trends affecting specific groups or kinds of parks)
- Equity Zone Park Scores (park maintenance in communities affected by environmental health risks)
- Feature Scores (notable trends affecting specific features found inside parks)

3. Citywide Scores

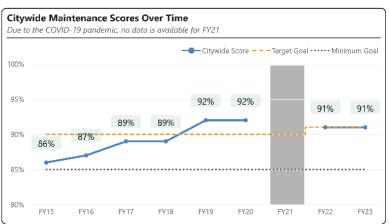
Citywide scores reflect the overall maintenance quality of the park system. The City revised its park maintenance evaluation methodology in FY15 to improve analysis and reporting of maintenance challenges. RPD sets a target goal for the citywide average score each year for San Francisco's Annual Performance Results; in FY22 the target goal rose from 90% to 91% to reflect recent performance. Additionally, RPD tracks parks that score at or above 85%—which indicates a park is generally well-maintained and is used as a "minimum goal" or reference point.

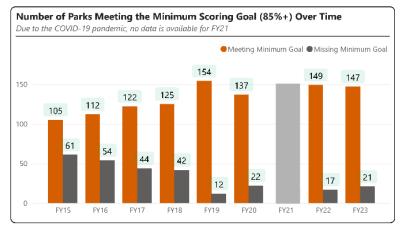
Citywide Average Score

- The citywide score was 91% in FY23, unchanged from FY22 and down one percentage point from pre-pandemic levels in FY20.
- Since FY15, the citywide score has increased by an average of 0.7 percentage points each year.
- The citywide average score met its target goal for the 4th consecutive year.

Parks Scoring More Than 85%

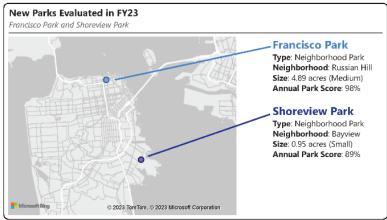
 In FY23, 147 of 167 parks (88%) met or exceeded the "minimum goal" of 85% or higher. This proportion is down slightly from FY22, when 149 of 166 parks (90%) met this goal.





New Parks in FY23

Francisco's park system and were evaluated for the first time in FY23: Francisco Park in Russian Hill (scoring 98%) and Shoreview Park in Bayview (scoring 89%). To learn more about how a park is brought into San Francisco's park system, refer to the appendix section spotlighting the development of Francisco Park.

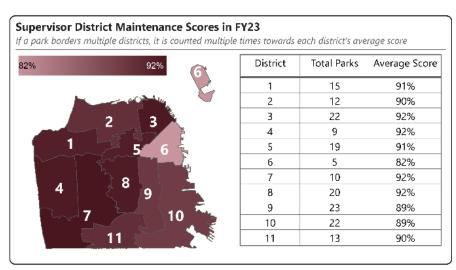


4. Park Scores by Geography

Individual park scores can be averaged together and analyzed by a specific geography of interest. One such selected geography presented in this report are the electoral boundaries of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. Another geography is "Park Service Areas" (PSAs), an internal designation that RPD park managers and staff use to more evenly divide up and administer maintenance services. Parks which may cross the borders of more than one geography (such as Golden Gate Park spanning multiple Supervisor Districts) are counted multiple times in each.

Supervisor District Average Scores

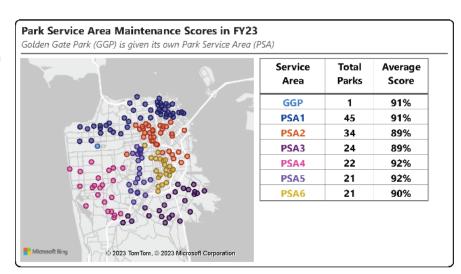
In FY23, the highest district score was 92% (Districts 3, 4, 7, and 8) while the lowest was 82% (District 6). The range, the difference between the highest and lowest score, was 10 percentage points in FY23, the highest since the current methodology was adopted in FY15. Prior to this high, the range was stable at six percentage points in the previous three years.



• District 6 has the lowest score of 82%, a notable outlier. The second lowest district score was 89%. District 6 has the lowest number of parks (five) of any district, and so its average score may be more prone to dramatic fluctuations because it is based on fewer underlying park scores. Four of five parks had lower scores in District 6 compared to last year.

Park Scores by PSA

 In FY23, all PSAs scored between 89% and 92%. There was very little score variation among PSAs.



5. Scores For Groups of Parks

CON and RPD staff conducted maintenance evaluations for 168 parks in FY23. In San Francisco, every resident is less than a 10-minute walk from a park. By comparing year-over-year scores of specific parks, residents will better understand how their neighborhood parks' maintenance changes over time. Parks are categorized by their size and amenities.

Scores by Park Type

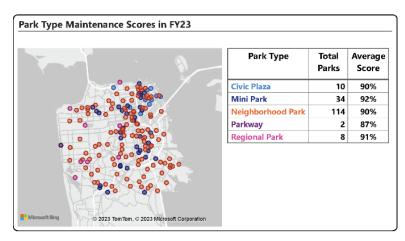
- There are 114 Neighborhood Parks, 34 Mini Parks, 10 Civic Plazas, 8 Regional Parks, and 2 Parkways in the park system.
- In FY23, all park types scored between 87% and 92%. All scored above the minimum goal of 85%.
- From FY22 to FY23, Civic Plazas, Mini Parks, and Neighborhood Parks saw percentage point declines of three, one, and one respectively. Regional Parks and Parkways saw percentage point increases of one and four respectively.

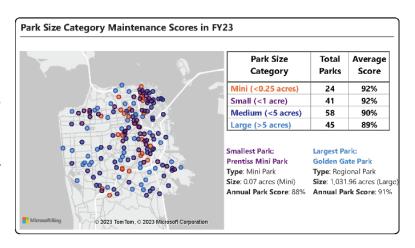
Scores by Park Size

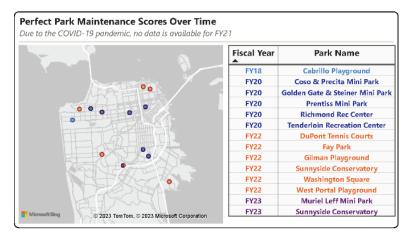
- The average size of a park evaluated in FY23 was 18 acres, or 12 acres when excluding the outlier of Golden Gate Park (1,000+ acres large).
- There are 65 parks (39%) under 1 acre, and 103 parks (61%) are one acre or larger. For comparison, a standard American football field is about 1.3 acres.

Perfect Scoring Parks

- Two parks received perfect scores of 100% in FY23: Muriel Leff Mini Park (up two points from FY22) and Sunnyside Conservatory (unchanged; second year of perfect score).
- In prior fiscal years, there were six perfectscoring parks in FY22, five in FY20, and one in FY18.







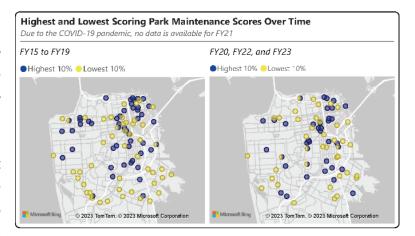
Largest Park Score Changes

- From FY22 to FY23, 72 parks saw their average score improve, 15 parks stayed the same, and 81 parks saw lower scores.
- While three of the top 10 parks with lower scores were in the southeast section of the city, five of the top 10 parks with higher scores were in the same area.

Top 10 Score Increases		Top 10 Score Decreases		
Park Name	Score Change	Park Name	Score Change	
Hilltop Park	15	Visitacion Valley Playground	-13	
Visitacion Valley Greenway	15	Gilman Playground	-12	
Esprit Park	13	Presidio Wall Playground	-12	
Palou & Phelps Park	12	Allyne Park	-12	
Park Presidio Blvd	11	SOMA West Skate Park	-11	
Richmond Rec Center	11	Maritime Plaza	-11	
Yacht Harbor and Marina Green	8	Silver Terrace Playground	-11	
Randolph & Bright Mini Park	8	Alamo Square	-11	
Presidio Heights Playground	8	Rochambeau Playground	-9	
Embarcadero Plaza	8	Portsmouth Square	-9	

Highest- and Lowest-Scoring Parks

- From FY15 to FY19, the highest 10% scoring parks were concentrated in the north, while the lowest 10% scoring parks were in the south/east. FY20, FY22, and FY23 saw a more even geographic spread of highest and lowest scoring parks across the city.
- The average park score among the highest 10% scoring parks was 98% in FY23. The average park score among the lowest 10% scoring parks was 80%. The range between the highest scoring park (100%) and the lowest (71%) was 29 percentage points.



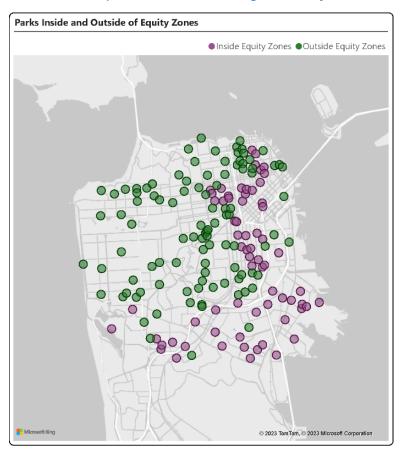
6. Equity Zones

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 <u>Environmental Justice Communities</u> tool developed by the San Francisco Planning Department. The new standard helps RPD meet its <u>Strategic Plan objectives</u>.

Equity Zone Parks by Neighborhood

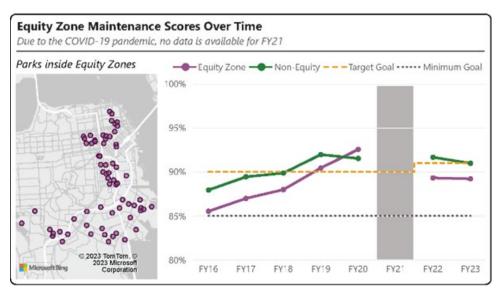
In FY23, 67 out of the total 168 parks in the park maintenance evaluation program were in Equity Zones. The count of Equity Zone parks by neighborhood is shown below:

- *Mission* 14 parks
- o Bayview 11 parks
- Visitacion Valley, Western Addition- 7 parks
- Downtown/Civic Center 6 parks
- Ocean View, Outer Mission, SOMA 4 parks
- Chinatown, Excelsior 3 parks
- Lakeshore, North Beach 2 parks
- Bernal Heights, Nob Hill, Potrero Hill, Russian Hill – 1 park



Equity Zone Park Scores

- The average score for parks inside Equity Zones was 89% in FY23, unchanged from FY22. The average score for parks outside Equity Zone parks was 91% in FY23, down one percentage point from FY22.
- Parks in Equity Zones typically have lower scores, on average, than parks outside of Equity Zones. However, Equity Zone parks reversed this trend in



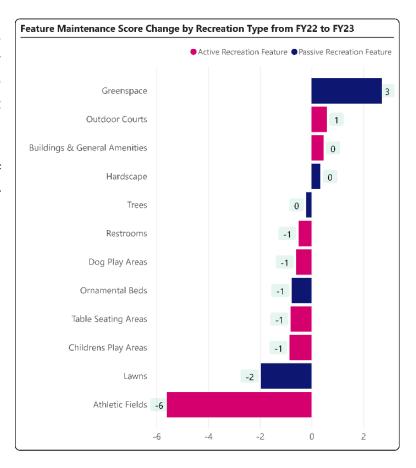
FY20 when they scored one percentage point higher than their non-Equity Zone counterparts.

7. Feature Scores

Analyzing feature scores (the average score across all parks for a particular feature) lets RPD better plan maintenance needs across the whole park system. Residents can also use feature scores to find the parks best suited to their interests. Features can be categorized as "Active Recreation" (those used actively by visitors like Children's Play Areas or Restrooms) and "Passive Recreation" (those enjoyed passively like Trees or Hardscape).

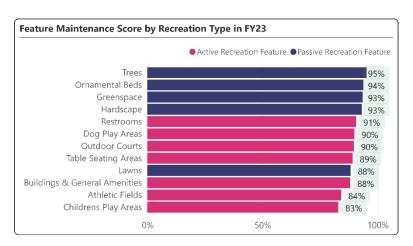
Citywide Feature Scores

• From FY22 to FY23, 8 of 12 features experienced score declines. Greenspace saw the highest increase (three percentage points), while Athletic Fields saw the highest decline (six percentage points). One possibility for such a steep decline may be attributed to the above-average amount of precipitation in San Francisco in December 2022 and January 2023.



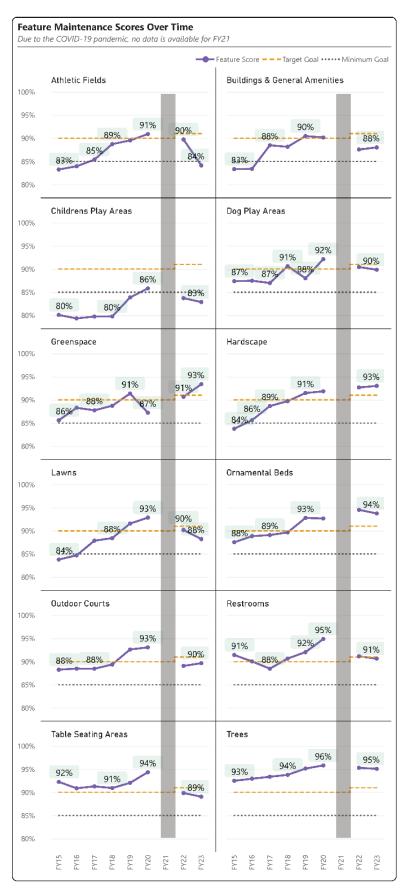
Passive/Active Feature Scores

 Passive Recreation features averaged a combined score of 93% in FY23, unchanged from FY23. Active Recreation features scored 88% in FY23, down one percentage from FY22. Active Recreation scores typically trail Passive Recreation scores because they require more frequent maintenance from harder usage, especially when park attendance surges.



Feature Scores Over Time

- Most feature scores saw a trend of general improvement from FY15 to FY21 up until the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Following the pandemic, features saw their scores slightly decline in FY22, with a mix of some features continuing to see a slight decline into FY23 while others experienced a modest recovery.
- Athletic Fields experienced a dramatic decline since the COVID-19 pandemic. Children's Play Areas experienced a less dramatic but similar decline.
- "Passive Recreation" features like Hardscape, Greenspace, Ornamental Beds, and Trees generally saw their scores improve or maintain their scores over time. Trees has remained the most stable feature with consistent scores +/- two points from FY15 to today. However, Lawns experienced a post-COVID decline of five percentage points from a peak of 93% in FY20 to 88% in FY23.



8. Appendix

A. 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

Evaluation Datasets at OpenData Portal

Annual Park Evaluation Scores, 2015-2023 (scores calculated using the current methodology)

Annual Park Evaluation Scores, 2005-2014 (scores calculated using an older methodology)

Park Evaluation and Related Reports

CON <u>Park Maintenance Program</u>
<u>CON Citizen Survey – Park Ratings</u>
<u>RPD Strategic Plan, 2021-2025 Update</u>
<u>Environmental Justice Communities Framework</u>

Park Maintenance Standards

RPD Park Maintenance Standards
RPD Park Maintenance Scores Website
CON Park Standards Methodology Explainer





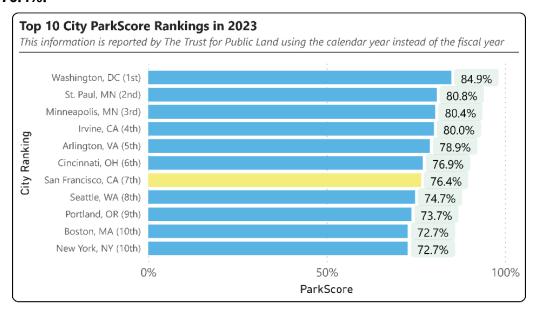


B. San Francisco Ranked 7th in Trust for Public Land's 2023 ParkScore Index

The <u>Trust for Public Land</u> is a national nonprofit whose purpose is to ensure everyone can benefit from healthy and high-quality outdoor spaces like parks, community gardens, and natural areas. The organization strives to work with local governments so that every resident lives within a 10-minute walk from a high-quality park. As part of this effort, they maintain an annual ranking of cities' park systems through the *ParkScore* program. 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 Trust for Public Land's ParkScore provides a supplementary measure of San Francisco's overall park quality based on five categories:

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

Raw scores are indexed against the national average to provide relative scores between 0% and 100%. Each of the five categories gets a score based on 14 underlying measure scores. The category scores are then averaged together for a single overall ParkScore. In FY23, <u>San Francisco</u> was ranked 7th in the nation based on a ParkScore of 76.4%.



C. Spotlight on Francisco Park: How a New Park is Added and Evaluated

One of the most recently renovated parks to get included in park evaluations is Francisco Park, located on Bay Street between Larkin and Hyde Streets in the northern neighborhood of Russian Hill. This now iconic park, once only minimally developed, is now a destination location with views of the San Francisco Bay and beyond. RPD



A view of the property before any work had started.

partnered with the Francisco Park Conservancy, which raised the bulk of the funding for the 2022 park renovation.

The original park was simply turf, a bench, and a Dog Play Area (DPA). The park expanded to include the reservoir area just up the hill above the park and was terraced to make the hillside space accessible. Francisco Park now consists of a DPA, Children's Play Area (CPA), community garden, small maintenance yard, landscaped areas, picnic area, restroom, staircase access from Hyde Street, and a windy ADA-accessible path. It also includes a signature viewing bridge, seating throughout the park, and donor tiles on display on staircase risers. With the park completed, making it part of the Park Evaluation Program followed.

The RPD Asset Management Unit (AMU) manages the Park Evaluation Program (PEP). Parks are evaluated according to specific questions (standards) based on what features are present at a park. See examples and explanations elsewhere in this report. Park-specific data must be collected and entered into various AMU software systems and all necessary for a park to be a part of PEP.

Although the AMU staff may become aware that a park is coming "on-line", it is a formal Change Form that initiates this process. Capital Project Managers complete this form for major park renovations, and field managers complete it for smaller-scope renovations.

As an electronic document only, the Change Form arrives in the email in-boxes of AMU staff, is carefully reviewed, additional information may be requested and is entered into the Change List, essentially the AMU's "To Do" list. The AMU meets to review the list every two weeks and assigns new forms to AMU staff, as well as reviews progress on previously assigned items. The meeting also includes the Capital Planning Analyst, as these changes need to be included in the Capital Division's capital planning software, VFA. Staff from the Structural Maintenance Yard (SMY) will soon be included in these meetings to capture new equipment in TMA (RPD's Asset Management software) for SMY's upcoming Preventive Maintenance program implementation. Among other functions, TMA includes a Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS) for field staff work requests. Keeping these various systems in sync preserves data integrity. However, that's not all RPD's systems requiring data to include a new park in the PEP program.

The Change Form includes general narrative descriptions, value of a project, date completed and hopefully, some kind of plans, without which the AMU's job becomes much more difficult. After studying the plans and identifying major features at the park, GIS staff is typically first to visit the site and "ground truth" the information.

Plans are still typically provided in PDF (Picture Data Format) format, but as technology advances, AMU has been requesting digitized files, preferably CAD (Computer Assisted Design) and eventually BIM (Building Information Modeling). PDF files require a more laborious manual creation of the data in GIS, while CAD and BIM files allow for semi-automated creation of the records, saving much time and energy. Occasionally, AMU must work from hard copy blueprints.

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. AMU staff typically tours a brand-new park, meeting the site staff for an orientation. When entering data into any system, an in-person visit makes the visualization and data entry much simpler. For a small park the GIS data entry might take a few hours; for larger parks, it can take several days to weeks.

Next, GIS staff marks the location as "entered in GIS" and the work then passes on to the TMA administrators. 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 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. The status of the site is now "TMA Done."



 $\label{lem:approx} \textit{A view of Francisco Park after work was completed.}$

None of this information has yet been entered into the Park Evaluation application, nor has it been forwarded to the 311 system. 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: including merging records together, splitting records, and changing record types. AMU adds the new site to the sites table, giving access to the automated assignment script to assign the new park for evaluation. Now the site is "on-line" and will be included in the next round of assignments that are sent out to our evaluators.

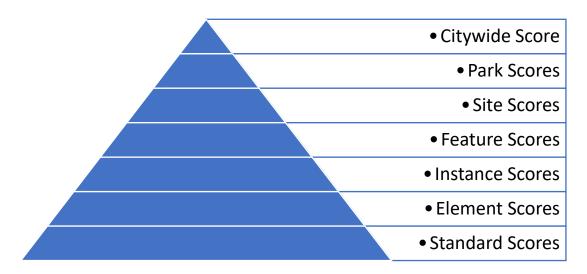
Thus, a park becomes part of the Park Evaluation Program. As noted, this entire process can take a few hours, days or weeks depending on the size of the property. The recent acquisition of the Mission Bay Parks took several months.

D. Park Maintenance Scoring Methodology

This section provides an overview of park maintenance score calculation. For a more thorough understanding, review the Park Standards Methodology Explainer listed in the Park Maintenance Standards section above.

<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 consists of at least one element.

An evaluator will check every applicable <u>Standard</u> for each <u>Feature</u> in a park. If a <u>Standard</u> fails inspection (e.g., a Lawn has too many gopher holes), then its entire <u>Element</u> (e.g., Turf Maintenance) would fail too. An <u>Element</u> can only pass if all its underlying <u>Standards</u> pass. If there are multiple <u>Instances</u> of a <u>Feature</u> (such as a basketball and tennis court—both part of the Outdoor Courts <u>Feature</u>), have their passing <u>Elements</u> summed together and are divided against their summed total <u>Elements</u> (which include the failing ones, too). An overall <u>Feature</u> score is calculated this way. Each <u>Feature</u> score is averaged together to create a <u>Park</u> score. Or if the park is too large for a single evaluator to assess, it is first broken down into smaller, more manageable <u>Sites</u> before getting rolled up to a <u>Park</u> score. The average of all <u>Park</u> scores together creates the <u>Citywide</u> score. Please refer to the <u>Fictitious</u> Scoring Example on the next page.



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

FY23 Park Evaluations By the Numbers

There are <u>295 unique park maintenance standards</u> that evaluators use to assess the City's parks. In FY23, these standards were assessed **150,213 times** via **732 evaluations** conducted across **168 parks**! All these observations and measurements go into the **one citywide score**.