



# The 2016 Report Card on Parks: *Spotlight on the Community Parks Initiative*





Orchard Beach, the Bronx

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# Introduction to the Report Card on Parks

The Report Card on Parks is the only independent, citywide evaluation of the maintenance and conditions of New York City's public parks.

In 2003, New Yorkers for Parks (NY4P) released the first Report Card on Parks, an award-winning, data-driven evaluation of the maintenance conditions of playgrounds, small and large parks, beaches, and turf fields. Over the past fourteen years, we have published thirteen Report Cards, evaluating almost 300 parks, and covering thousands of acres of parkland.

The Report Card on Parks was designed to achieve the following goals:

- Provide an independent assessment of park performance against defined maintenance benchmarks.
- Highlight high-performing parks, drawing attention to the lessons we can learn from their successful maintenance and upkeep.
- Shine a spotlight on low-performing parks, drawing attention to immediate maintenance issues and encouraging a more efficient and equitable distribution of limited resources towards the parks that are most in need.

For the latest Report Card on Parks: Spotlight on the Community Parks Initiative, NY4P returns to evaluating neighborhood parks, sized between 1 and 20 acres, for the first time since 2008. Unlike the larger, high-profile parks in New York City, neighborhood parks are often solely dependent on public funding and, as previous Report Cards have documented, often receive inadequate maintenance attention.

Neighborhood parks in New York City are the subject of renewed attention and reinvestment under the administration of Mayor Bill DeBlasio. NYC Parks Commissioner Mitchell Silver announced the administration's commitment to equity in parks, the Community Parks Initiative (CPI), in 2014. CPI identifies 55 priority park investment zones across New York City's five boroughs, and has funded the redesign and reconstruction of 47 parks within the first two years of the program. NYC Parks followed a data-driven process to determine which parks to invest in. The agency analyzed 20 years of capital investment data for parks citywide, identifying 215 parks across the city that received less than a quarter million dollars (\$250,000)



between 1992 and 2013. Additionally, the agency identified priority zones: 55 neighborhoods that are densely populated, growing, and home to a higher-than-average percentage of families with incomes below the poverty line. In all, 134 parks were identified as having extreme capital, or big-budget, needs within the priority zones.<sup>1</sup> To date, investment commitments made in CPI zones has been limited to parks that are small in size – less than five acres, on average.

NY4P designed the 2016 Report Card to focus on the maintenance conditions of the neighborhood parks, between 5 and 20 acres in size, in priority zones. These parks were too large to be included in CPI's transformative model. 35 parks meet NY4P's criteria for inclusion, and were surveyed for this report. Trained field researchers visited and assessed these parks, collecting thousands of data points on conditions and maintenance. NY4P's analysis of these true neighborhood parks in CPI priority zones will help agency and elected officials continue to prioritize maintenance and capital improvements in the communities that need them the most.

<sup>1</sup> "NYC Parks: Framework for an Equitable Future," 2014, pp 12, 14.

## 2016 Report Card on Parks: Map of Survey Sites

### BRONX

1. Aqueduct Walk
2. Barretto Point Park
3. Bridge Park
4. Concrete Plant Park
5. Mill Pond Park
6. Rainey Park
7. Starlight Park
8. Tremont Park

### BROOKLYN

9. Betsy Head Park
10. Breukelen Ballfields
11. Brower Park
12. Bushwick Inlet Park
13. Cooper Park
14. Herbert Von King Park
15. Lincoln Terrace Park
16. Lindover Park
17. Maria Hernandez Park
18. St. John's Recreation Center

### MANHATTAN

19. Col. Young Playground
20. Harlem River Park
21. Jackie Robinson Park
22. J. Hood Wright Park
23. Riverside Park (135th to 153rd Streets)
24. Sara D. Roosevelt Park
25. Thomas Jefferson Park
26. Tompkins Square Park

### QUEENS

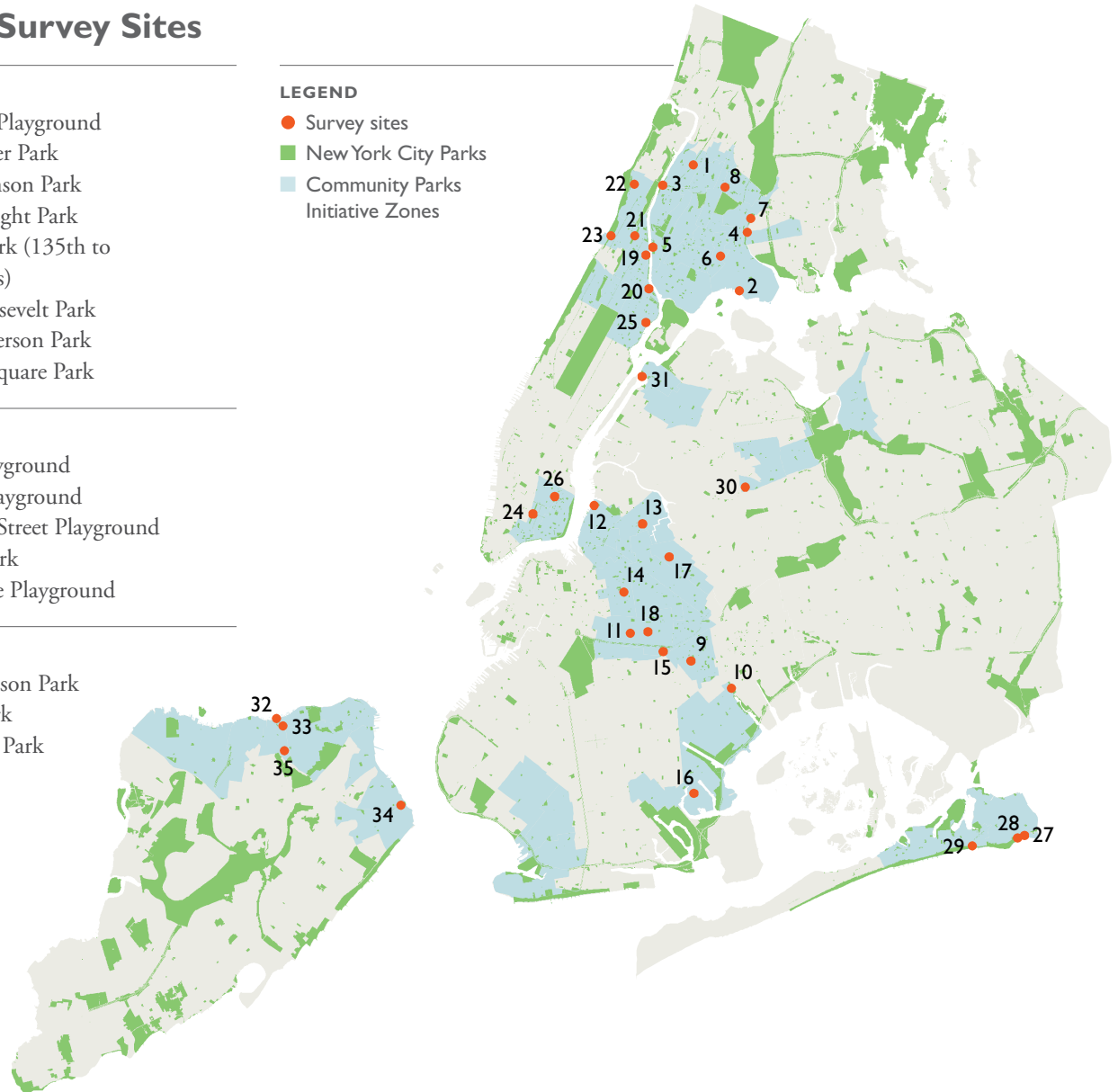
27. Beach 9 Playground
28. Beach 17 Playground
29. Beach 30th Street Playground
30. Elmhurst Park
31. Halletts Cove Playground

### STATEN ISLAND

32. Cpl. Thompson Park
33. Heritage Park
34. Von Briesen Park
35. Walker Park

### LEGEND

- Survey sites
- New York City Parks
- Community Parks Initiative Zones



# The Survey

This report builds on New Yorkers for Parks' award-winning Report Card on Parks survey methodology, first implemented in 2003.

In 2005, the Report Card on Parks received a Community Indicators Award from the Community Indicators Consortium, a program of the Brookings Institution's Urban Markets Initiative. A full discussion of the methodology can be found in the Detailed Methodology section of this report.

## PARK SELECTION

The Report Card on Parks: Spotlight on the Community Parks Initiative surveys NYC Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks) properties between 5 and 20 acres in size in the 55 CPI zones. The following types of properties were removed from the study: highway properties, undeveloped parkland, islands, golf courses, marshes, beaches, and forests. The final survey universe includes 35 parks, listed on the previous page.

## SURVEY SCHEDULE

Survey work was conducted in the summer months of 2015, beginning in late June of 2015, and concluded in late August. Surveyors, working in teams of at least two, visited parks between 10am and 5pm on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. Surveyors did not visit parks the day after the Fourth of July to allow NYC Parks staff time to clean after holiday celebrations. A subset of parks was re-surveyed on Saturdays, between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. The results of those evaluations can be found in the Appendix of this report, on page 28.

## SURVEY PROTOCOL

The Report Card on Parks examines 12 categories of park features: athletic fields, bathrooms, courts, drinking fountains, immediate environment, lawns, natural areas, pathways, playgrounds, sitting areas, trees, and water bodies. Each feature is evaluated for performance in four categories: maintenance, cleanliness, safety, and structural integrity. Surveyors record feature assessments on tablet computers and provide photographic documentation for each unique feature evaluation.

## LETTER GRADES

Each park received a feature score (0 to 100) for each of the 12 features present in the survey zones. Parks were not penalized if they did not contain all 12 features.

Feature scores were then aggregated and weighted to arrive at an overall park score of 0 to 100. A detailed accounting of the scoring methodology can be found in the Appendix. Overall park numerical scores correspond to the following letter grade conversions:

### Grades

<i>Raw Numerical Grade</i>	<i>Letter Grade</i>
97-100	A+
93-96	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
80-82	B-
77-79	C+
73-76	C
70-72	C-
60-69	D
59 and below	F

# Scores



# Feature Scores

The Report Card on Parks assesses the conditions of 12 features within each of the 35 parks in our survey. During a typical field visit, surveyors evaluate the condition of each bathroom, court, drinking fountain, field, lawn, natural area, playground, and sitting area. Surveyors evaluate the park-wide condition of trees, pathways, and water bodies.

This section discusses the performance of park features across the 35 parks surveyed, citing the conditions and areas that scored poorly, and that are therefore in greatest need of attention. These scores consider each feature form individually, providing a system-wide grade for each park feature. As combined scores, these figures mask considerable variability in the performance of features from park to park. Nonetheless, they provide a high-level view of the systemic conditions in parks, whether good or bad.

Grades	
Raw Numerical Grade	Letter Grade
97-100	A+
93-96	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
80-82	B-
77-79	C+
73-76	C
70-72	C-
60-69	D
59 and below	F

## Athletic Fields

69



Harlem River Park



Bushwick Inlet Park

*The athletic fields score reflects the conditions found at natural grass, asphalt, and synthetic fields for sports like soccer, football, and baseball.*

The most common problems with athletic fields were general maintenance needs. Nearly a quarter of natural grass fields had unacceptable bench and bleacher conditions. Two thirds of asphalt fields had extensive cracking and weed growth on the playing surfaces. Almost half of synthetic turf fields exhibited maintenance needs like loose seams or areas where the surfacing has worn away.

## Bathrooms

76



Lindover Park



Mill Pond Park

*The bathrooms score reflects the conditions found at each bathroom, often called comfort stations by NYC Parks.*

Two out of every five bathrooms evaluated had stall doors that could not lock. Bathrooms had clear day-to-day maintenance issues, as well. One in five bathrooms did not have sufficient toilet paper. One third of all bathrooms did not have sufficient hand soap or sanitizer present. One in five bathrooms had unacceptable foul odors and/or dirty conditions.



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## Courts 84



Maria Hernandez Park



Harlem River Park

*The courts score reflects the conditions found at all outdoor basketball, handball, tennis, bocce, volleyball and hockey facilities.*

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Half of the courts surveyed showed poor general maintenance conditions. Cracked surfaces and holes, creating dangerous trip hazards, affected 16% of the courts. A third of all courts lacked basic equipment such as basketball nets.

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## Drinking Fountains 55



Col. Young Park



Breukelen Ballfields

*The drinking fountains score reflects the conditions found at each drinking fountain.*

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Two out of every five drinking fountains autofailed due to thoroughly unsafe, unclean, or inoperable conditions. Some drinking fountains had multiple negative conditions that would independently cause the feature to autofail. 17% of the fountain basins showed evidence of algae or other unsanitary substances. 15% of the fountains were blocked by standing water or other debris. One in five fountains showed signs of needing maintenance attention for less egregious conditions, such as having deteriorated paint.

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## Immediate Environment 90



Bridge Park



Tompkins Square Park

*The immediate environment score reflects surveyor evaluations of how well a park is insulated from potential negative impacts from its surroundings. Intrusive odors, emissions, exhaust, and excessive noise are monitored, and park access is taken into consideration.*

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One in five parks was found to be negatively affected by disruptive noise emanating from the park's exterior, such as highway, truck, train, or construction noise pollution. Surveyors noticed noxious odors surrounding almost 20% of the parks surveyed.

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## Lawns 76



Tompkins Square Park



Barretto Point Park

*The lawns score reflects conditions found at all lawns, landscaped areas, and gardens, as well as the conditions of trees found within lawns, landscaped areas, and gardens.*

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28% of the areas surveyed had unacceptable conditions, such as patches of overgrown grass, discolored grass, or bare earth. One in five areas was infested with weeds, had trees that were not in good condition, and/or was impaired by dangerous amounts of broken glass. Two in five areas had general unresolved maintenance issues, such as poor plant maintenance.

# Feature Scores (continued)

## Natural Areas

85



Bridge Park



Riverside Park

*The natural areas score reflects conditions found in spaces that retain some degree of wild nature and native ecosystems, providing habitat for native plants and animals. These are non-manicured spaces such as wetlands, forests, and meadows.*

A third of the natural areas in the parks were infested by invasive plant species, and two in five of them had unresolved maintenance issues like needing litter to be picked up.

## Pathways

88



Aqueduct Walk



Beach 17 Playground

*The pathways score reflects conditions found in park walkways made of asphalt, dirt, turf, pavers, brick and concrete. The pathways score includes benches along pathways, as well as fencing lining pathways.*

Ten percent of the pathways in parks had cracks or holes that were significant enough to affect a user's ability to navigate the path. Fifteen percent were suffering from structural deterioration, including spalling paving stones or missing segments. A third of pathways had some unresolved maintenance issue, such as needing new paint on benches.

## Playgrounds

88



Sara D. Roosevelt Park



Walker Park

*The playgrounds score reflects conditions found at all playground areas and for all playground equipment.*

The most consistent challenges to safety and clean conditions at playgrounds were degraded safety surfacing and the presence of litter. One in ten playgrounds was found to have safety surfacing that was cracked, peeling, or wearing away, and/or significant amounts of litter.

## Sitting Areas

87



Lindower Park



Starlight Park

*The sitting areas score reflects conditions found at places in parks that contain a grouping of benches, picnic tables, chess tables, and other discrete areas for sitting, including barbeque areas.*

Persistent maintenance issues negatively affected the scores of sitting areas in many parks. Although one in ten sitting areas had benches showing significant damage, more persistent were incidences of litter and general maintenance needs such as paint and repairs.

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## Trees

# 90



St. John's Recreation Center



J. Hood Wright Park

*The trees score reflects conditions found for trees contained within tree pits in the park. Trees on lawns are evaluated in the lawns score.*

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The most significant problems identified for trees in tree pits were consistently related to the health and status of the trees themselves. 15% of the parks had dead or low-hanging branches, and one out of five parks had stumps or dead trees requiring removal. In addition, tree pits were often in poor physical shape: one out of five parks had tree pits with disrupted pavers, weed growth, or general maintenance problems like poor mulching or the presence of litter.

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## Water Bodies

# 77



Hallets Cove Park



Starlight Park

*The water bodies score reflects conditions found on inland water bodies, such as lakes and creeks, as well as shoreline areas along the harbor and rivers.*

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Litter and general maintenance needs were consistent challenges to clean and well-maintained water bodies and waterfront areas. Over half of the water bodies surveyed were affected by man-made litter and/or undesirable natural debris.



# Feature Findings

NY4P has identified key findings about features common throughout parks, leading to system-wide insights about maintenance and capital needs.

## Drinking Fountains

The lowest-scoring feature evaluated, Drinking Fountains, scored 55 out of 100.

143 fountains were evaluated by surveyors. Of that group, 60 (42%) autofailed upon receiving automatic scores of zero for meeting one of five major threshold conditions. A drinking fountain will autofail if one or more egregious conditions are found to be present, detailed in the table below.

Condition	% of all fountains
Dangerous conditions or unsanitary litter or broken glass	8%
Lacks water pressure required to drink	12%
Algae or unsanitary substance in basin or around the base	17%
Standing water, broken glass, or litter in the fountain basin	15%
Leaks in the fountain structure	8%



*Drinking fountains with standing water are automatically failed.*

Most of these conditions can be remedied, or prevented, with the frequent attention of skilled laborers, such as plumbers. 50 fountains, 35% of all fountains evaluated, autofailed due to conditions that could be remedied by frequent repair checks done by trained staff.

In addition, other day-to-day maintenance concerns contributed to the low scores achieved by many fountains evaluated for the study. Peeling paint, graffiti, weed growth, and litter are frequent culprits of low-scoring drinking fountains.

## Athletic Fields

The second lowest-scoring feature evaluated in the study, Athletic Fields, scored 69 out of 100. Each type of field presented clear maintenance failures.

Natural grass fields suffered from both structural deficiencies and day-to-day maintenance problems. Surveyors found that one in four fields had unacceptable conditions in amenities like benches and bleachers. One in five fields had problems with fences, backstops, and caging. The playing surface was found to be unevenly graded in one in five natural grass fields.

Asphalt fields were found to have similar maintenance failures. One in five asphalt fields were found to have unacceptable conditions in benches and bleachers, and/or backstops, fencing, and caging. Two-thirds of asphalt playing fields evaluated for the study had cracks and holes in the playing surfaces, rendering them unsafe for recreation.



*Long grass, a sign of little maintenance, prevents field use at Betsy Head Park*

Almost half of the synthetic turf fields had clear maintenance needs such as loose seams, holes in the playing surface, or worn-away areas.

Unreliable playing surfaces and sub-standard field amenities for teams and other park users are clear impediments to healthy and safe physical recreation.

## Bathrooms

Bathrooms scored 76 out of 100 when examined across all parks.

The low scores received by bathrooms are largely due to day-to-day maintenance failures. 40% of the bathrooms surveyed had stall doors that did not lock, effectively taking those stalls out of service for users concerned with privacy. One in five bathrooms were found to lack toilet paper. One third of all bathrooms did not have soap and/or hand sanitizer. When comfort stations persistently lack basic supplies, they pose a threat to public health conditions. Hand-in-hand with this distressing absence of supplies were unacceptable dirty and unsanitary conditions found in bathrooms. One in five bathrooms was found to have foul odors and/or dirty conditions.



*Portable toilets are often locked and inaccessible, like these at Lincoln Terrace Park.*

To be useful and inviting to park users, bathrooms must be clean and safe. They must also be on site and accessible. One in four parks evaluated for this study does not have a permanent bathroom that is reliably open to the public. Of the 35 parks evaluated, three (9%) have bathrooms inside recreation centers, which close when the recreation center closes – as early as 4:00 pm on some weekend days. Seven parks (20%) have no permanent bathrooms whatsoever, including two parks (6%) which are only served by portable toilets that are frequently plagued by unsanitary conditions or locked altogether.



# The Bronx

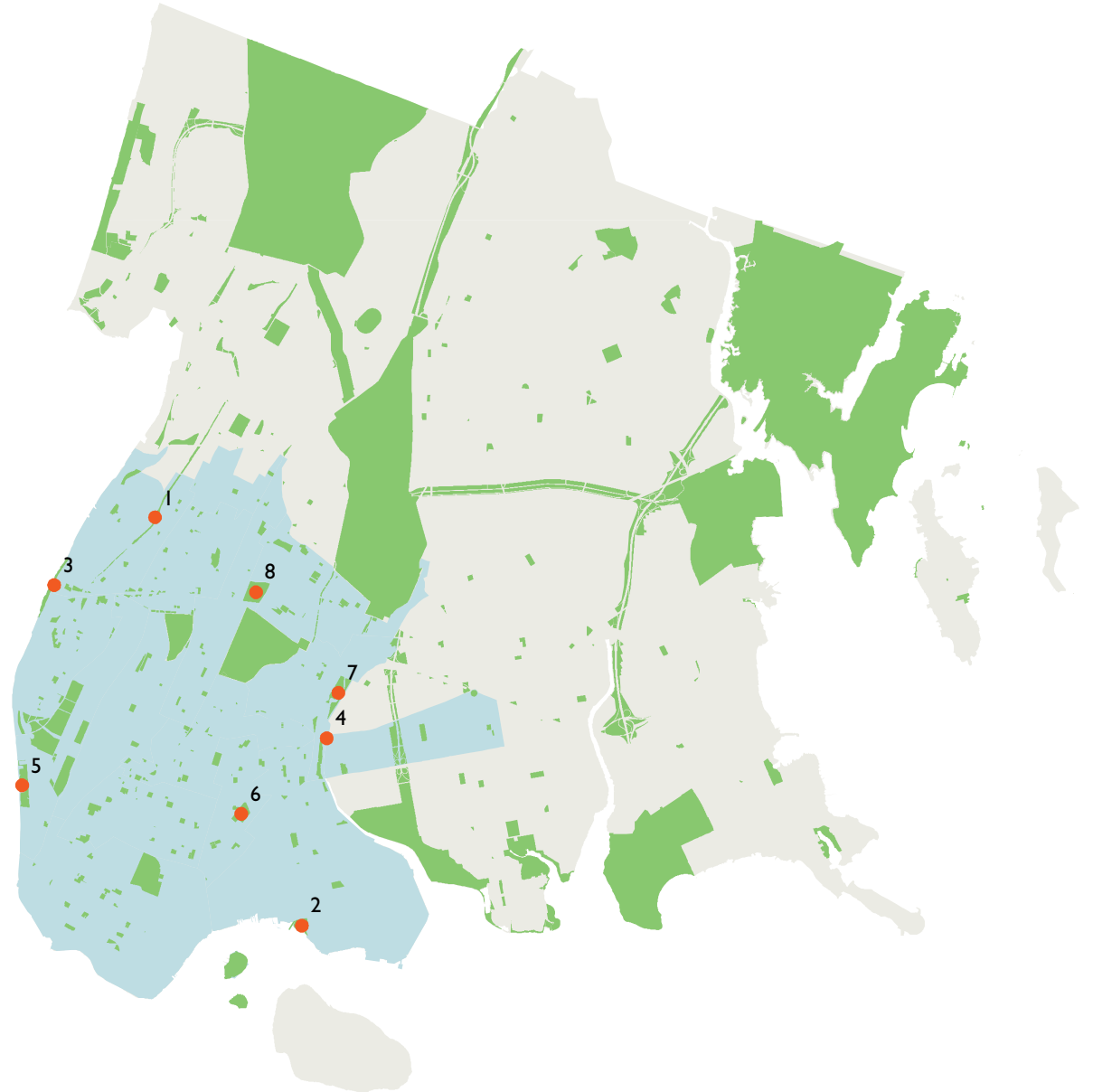
## Average Bronx Park Score

80

## Survey Sites

- Survey Site
- Bronx Parks
- Community Parks Initiative Zones

1. Aqueduct Walk
2. Barretto Point Park
3. Bridge Park
4. Concrete Plant Park
5. Mill Pond Park
6. Rainey Park
7. Starlight Park
8. Tremont Park



<b>Bronx Park Scores</b>	Aqueduct Walk	Barretto Point Park	Bridge Park	Concrete Plant Park	Mill Pond Park	Rainey Park	Starlight Park	Tremont Park
SCORE	83	82	90	78	88	74	70	79
GRADE	B	B-	A-	C+	B+	C	C-	C+
ATHLETIC FIELDS	-	-	-	-	-	42	0	56
BATHROOMS	-	96	-	71	97	75	0	87
COURTS	82	91	-	-	100	-	89	89
DRINKING FOUNTAINS	84	100	100	50	50	71	0	33
IMMEDIATE ENVIRONMENT	100	18	64	86	100	100	100	100
LAWNS	60	59	92	63	91	67	100	64
NATURAL AREAS	-	84	-	87	-	-	83	90
PATHWAYS	90	90	89	100	100	83	100	54
PLAYGROUNDS	91	88	-	-	100	-	100	94
SITTING AREAS	85	90	100	95	73	-	97	91
TREES	-	-	100	-	100	89	78	-
WATER BODIES	-	82	83	45	65	-	94	-
NEIGHBORHOOD	University Heights	Hunts Point	Highbridge	Hunts Point North	Harlem River	Longwood	West Farms	Tremont
COUNCIL DISTRICT	14	17	16	17	8	17	17	15
COMMUNITY BOARD	Bronx 7	Bronx 2	Bronx 4 & 5	Bronx 2	Bronx 4	Bronx 2	Bronx 9	Bronx 6
ACRES	8	11	7	6	15	8	12	15

GRADING CATEGORIES ■ EXCELLENT 97-90 ■ VERY GOOD 89-80 ■ SATISFACTORY 79-70 ■ CHALLENGED 69-60 ■ UNSATISFACTORY 59 and below

# Brooklyn

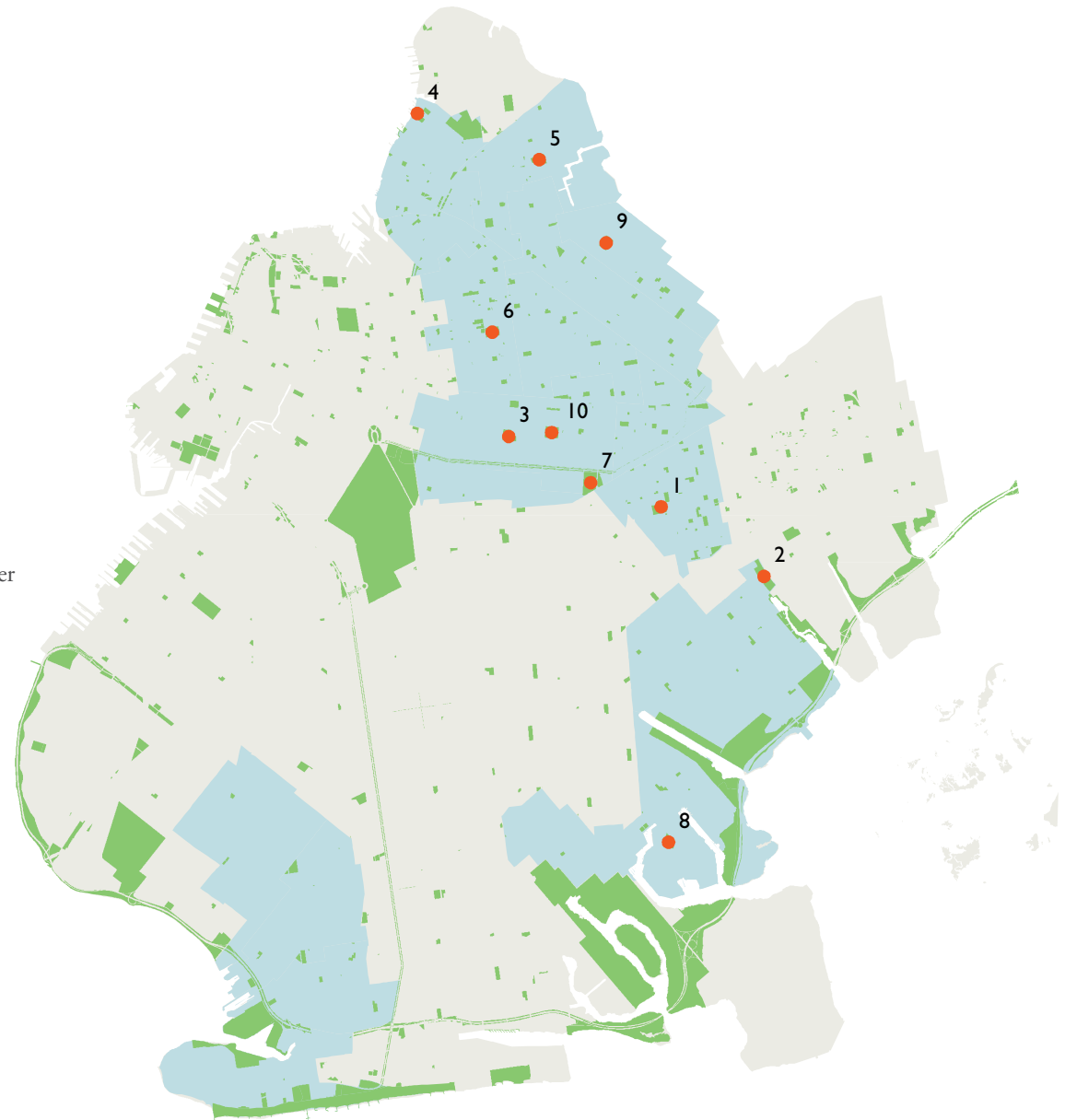
## Average Brooklyn Park Score

83

## Survey Sites

- Survey Site
- Brooklyn Parks
- Community Parks Initiative Zones

1. Betsy Head Park
2. Breukelen Ballfields
3. Brower Park
4. Bushwick Inlet Park
5. Cooper Park
6. Herbert Von King Park
7. Lincoln Terrace Park
8. Lindover Park
9. Maria Hernandez Park
10. St. John's Recreation Center





<b>Brooklyn Park Scores</b>	Betsy Head Park	Brower Park	Breukelen Ballfields	Bushwick Inlet Park	Cooper Park	Herbert Von King Park	Lincoln Terrace Park	Lindover Park	Maria Hernandez Park	St. John's Recreation Center
SCORE	73	90	87	87	92	73	73	88	77	93
GRADE	C	A-	B+	B+	A-	C	C	B+	C+	A
ATHLETIC FIELDS	45	100	86	90	-	0	45	-	74	91
BATHROOMS	81	92	97	95	88	90	59	79	46	-
COURTS	72	96	84	-	-	66	92	81	87	93
DRINKING FOUNTAINS	75	50	84	55	100	0	59	100	33	96
IMMEDIATE ENVIRONMENT	64	100	100	100	100	100	100	77	100	100
LAWNS	91	86	69	81	89	70	49	95	85	76
NATURAL AREAS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
PATHWAYS	55	89	83	90	100	88	87	100	100	97
PLAYGROUNDS	-	92	88	85	92	94	82	96	86	100
SITTING AREAS	-	100	-	90	79	76	73	75	-	100
TREES	93	100	89	100	100	86	81	-	100	67
WATER BODIES	-	-	-	85	-	-	-	-	-	-
NEIGHBORHOOD	Brownsville	Crown Heights	East New York	Williamsburg	Williamsburg	Bedford Stuyvesant	Weeksville	Mill Basin	Bushwick	Crown Heights
COUNCIL DISTRICT	41	36	42	33	34	36	41	46	34	36
COMMUNITY BOARD	Brooklyn 16	Brooklyn 8	Brooklyn 18	Brooklyn 1	Brooklyn 1	Brooklyn 3	Brooklyn 8	Brooklyn 18	Brooklyn 4	Brooklyn 8
ACRES	11	7	16	9	6	8	20	7	7	9

GRADING CATEGORIES ■ EXCELLENT 97-90 ■ VERY GOOD 89-80 ■ SATISFACTORY 79-70 ■ CHALLENGED 69-60 ■ UNSATISFACTORY 59 and below

# Manhattan

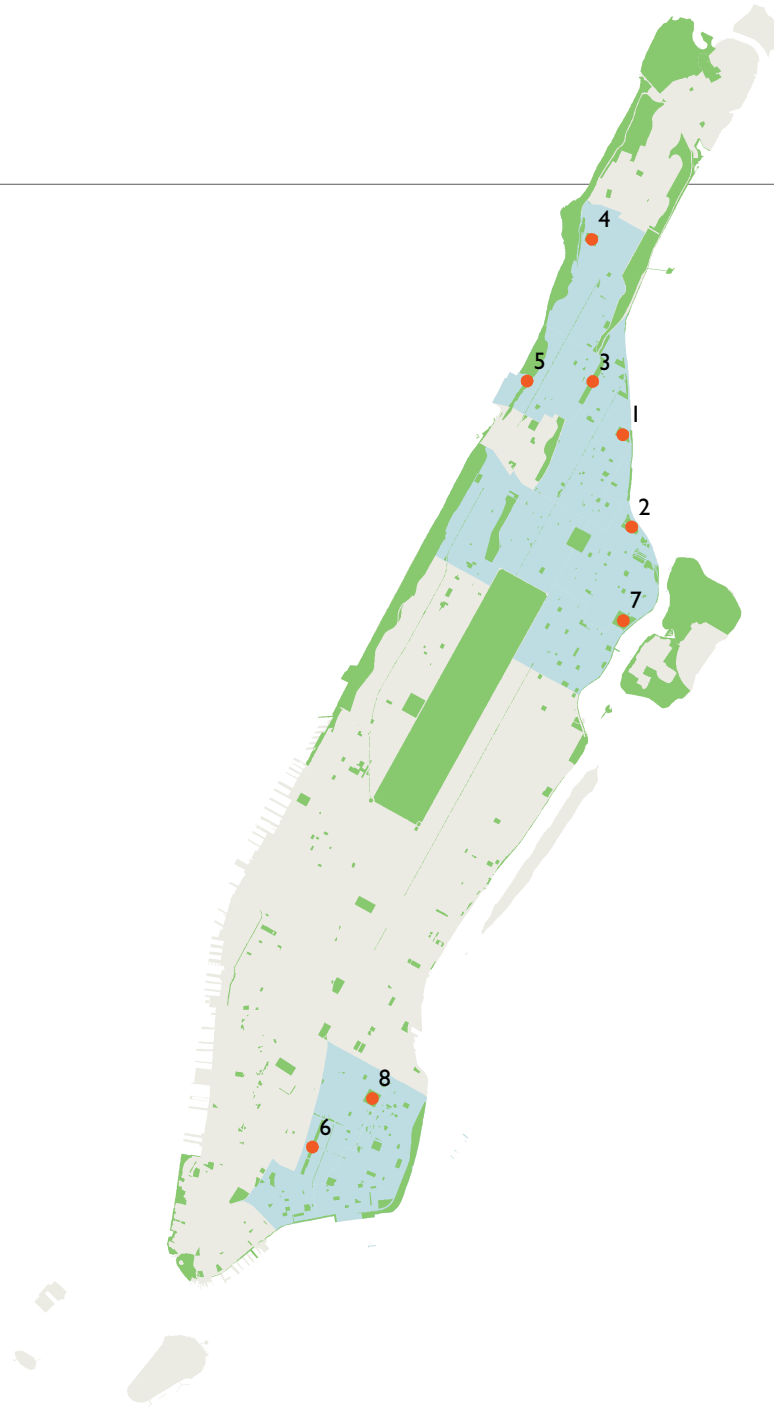
## Average Manhattan Park Score

72

## Survey Sites

- Survey Site
- Manhattan Parks
- Community Parks Initiative Zones

1. Col. Young Playground
2. Harlem River Park
3. Jackie Robinson Park
4. J. Hood Wright Park
5. Riverside Park
6. Sara D. Roosevelt Park
7. Thomas Jefferson Park
8. Tompkins Square Park



<b>Manhattan Park Scores</b>	Col.Young Playground	Harlem River Park	J. Hood Wright Park	Jackie Robinson Park	Riverside Park	Sara D. Roosevelt Park	Thomas Jefferson Park	Tompkins Square Park
SCORE	74	51	75	72	87	63	71	79
GRADE	C	F	C	C-	B+	D	C-	C+
ATHLETIC FIELDS	81	67	40	67	-	44	94	79
BATHROOMS	89	-	-	40	100	60	40	61
COURTS	87	89	76	91	-	74	81	82
DRINKING FOUNTAINS	0	31	50	50	60	22	0	71
IMMEDIATE ENVIRONMENT	100	64	100	77	100	64	100	77
LAWNS	89	38	54	84	93	70	90	85
NATURAL AREAS	-	-	-	81	88	-	-	-
PATHWAYS	-	0	83	79	86	90	96	80
PLAYGROUNDS	59	-	88	73	92	58	86	82
SITTING AREAS	86	85	78	87	74	83	62	87
TREES	-	-	89	89	100	75	92	89
WATER BODIES	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
NEIGHBORHOOD	Harlem	Harlem	Washington Heights	Sugar Hill	Hamilton Heights	Lower East Side	East Harlem	East Village
COUNCIL DISTRICT	9	8,9	10	9	7	1	8	2
COMMUNITY BOARD	Manhattan 10	Manhattan 11	Manhattan 12	Manhattan 9, 10	Manhattan 9	Manhattan 3	Manhattan 11	Manhattan 3
ACRES	7	6	7	13	13	8	13	11

GRADING CATEGORIES ■ EXCELLENT 97-90 ■ VERY GOOD 89-80 ■ SATISFACTORY 79-70 ■ CHALLENGED 69-60 ■ UNSATISFACTORY 59 and below

# Queens

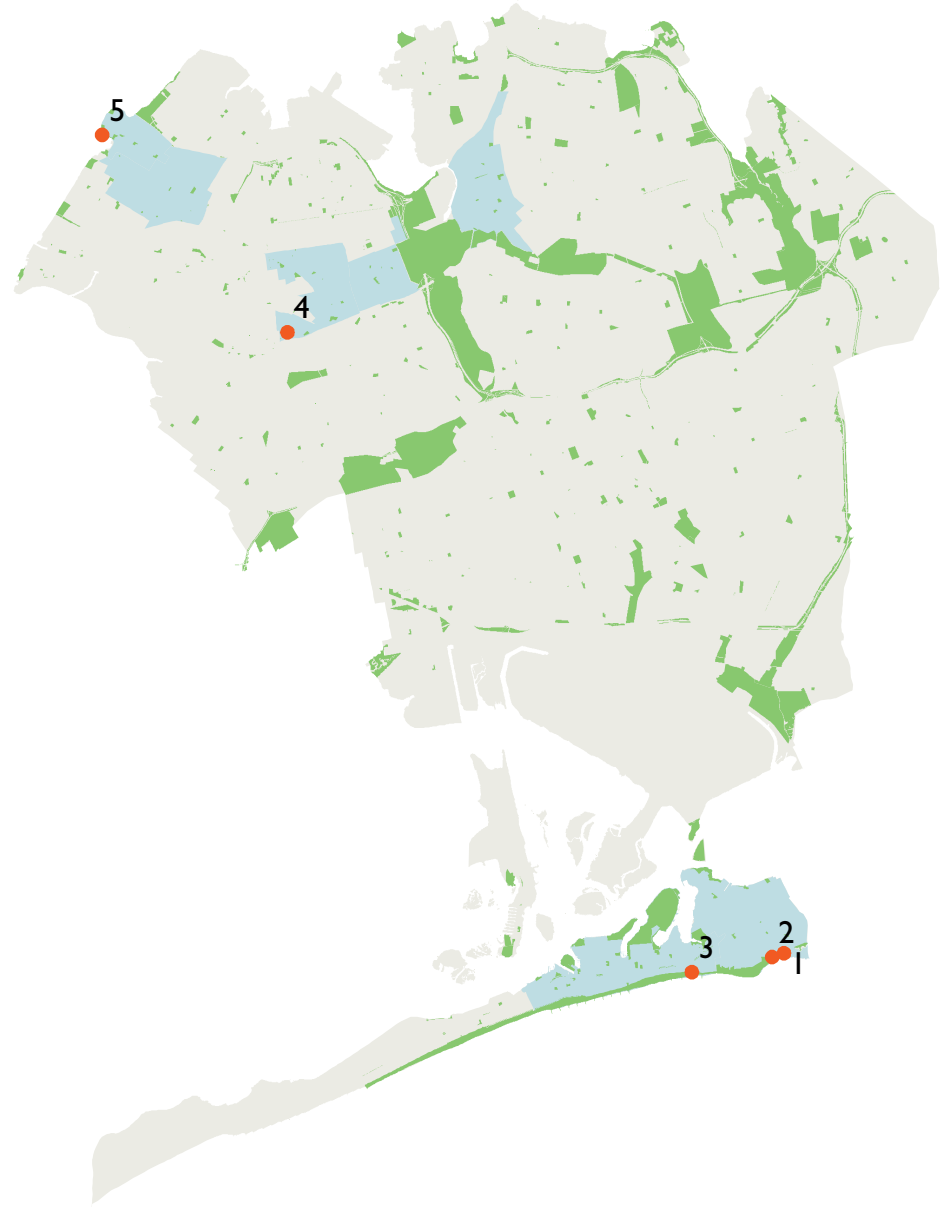
## Average Queens Park Score

88

## Survey Sites

- Survey Site
- Queens Parks
- Community Parks Initiative Zones

1. Beach 9 Playground
2. Beach 17 Playground
3. Beach 30th Street Playground
4. Elmhurst Park
5. Halletts Cove Playground



<b>Queens Park Scores</b>	Beach 9 Playground	Beach 17 Playground	Beach 30th St. Playground	Elmhurst Park	Hallets Cove Playground
SCORE	89	83	97	97	74
GRADE	B+	B	A+	A+	C
ATHLETIC FIELDS	-	79	100	100	75
BATHROOMS	100	92	100	77	-
COURTS	83	-	-	-	81
DRINKING FOUNTAINS	68	32	95	100	0
IMMEDIATE ENVIRONMENT	100	77	100	100	100
LAWNS	78	84	85	95	84
NATURAL AREAS	-	-	-	100	-
PATHWAYS	100	100	100	100	89
PLAYGROUNDS	94	96	97	100	87
SITTING AREAS	87	90	100	100	-
TREES	86	86	-	100	86
WATER BODIES	-	-	-	-	67
NEIGHBORHOOD	Far Rockaway	Far Rockaway	Wave Crest	Elmhurst	Astoria
COUNCIL DISTRICT	31	31	31	25	22
COMMUNITY BOARD	Queens 14	Queens 14	Queens 14	Queens 4	Queens 1
ACRES	6	14	7	6	6

GRADING CATEGORIES ■ EXCELLENT 97-90 ■ VERY GOOD 89-80 ■ SATISFACTORY 79-70 ■ CHALLENGED 69-60 ■ UNSATISFACTORY 59 and below

# Staten Island

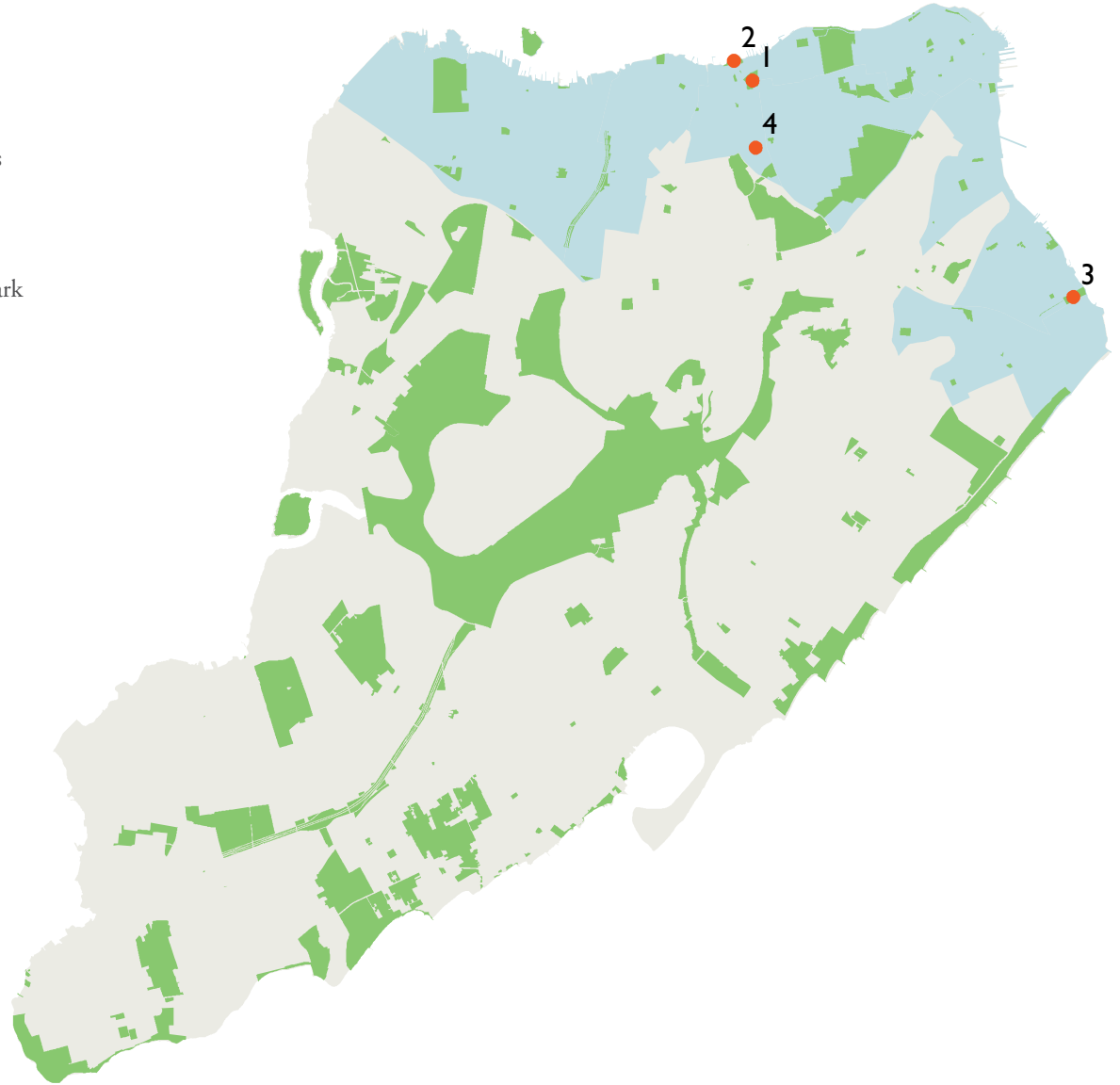
Average Staten Island  
Park Score

84

## Survey Sites

- Survey Site
- Staten Island Parks
- Community Parks Initiative Zones

1. Cpl. Thompson Park
2. Heritage Park
3. Von Briesen Park
4. Walker Park



<b>Staten Island Park Scores</b>	Cpl.Thompson Park	Heritage Park	Von Briesen Park	Walker Park
SCORE	79	89	83	86
GRADE	C+	B+	B	B
ATHLETIC FIELDS	90	-	-	90
BATHROOMS	93	-	-	83
COURTS	78	-	-	75
DRINKING FOUNTAINS	43	-	86	29
IMMEDIATE ENVIRONMENT	100	86	86	100
LAWNS	49	86	66	85
NATURAL AREAS	-	83	78	-
PATHWAYS	95	100	91	100
PLAYGROUNDS	88	-	-	88
SITTING AREAS	-	-	85	100
TREES	67	-	-	100
WATER BODIES	-	-	-	-
NEIGHBORHOOD	West New Brighton	West New Brighton	Fort Wadsworth	Randall Manor
COUNCIL DISTRICT	49	49	50	49
COMMUNITY BOARD	Staten Island I	Staten Island I	Staten Island I	Staten Island I
ACRES	11	10	14	5

GRADING CATEGORIES ■ EXCELLENT 97-90 ■ VERY GOOD 89-80 ■ SATISFACTORY 79-70 ■ CHALLENGED 69-60 ■ UNSATISFACTORY 59 and below

# Park Findings

Very poor conditions, comprised of maintenance and capital failures, were observed by surveyors at two neighborhood parks in particular. Sara D. Roosevelt and Harlem River Parks, the only sites to achieve grades below “C,” are clear candidates for a targeted renewal approach.

## Harlem River Park

Surveyors documented poor day-to-day maintenance throughout Harlem River Park. Drinking Fountains in the park were found in particularly poor condition, and scored a mere 31 out of 100. Four of the six fountains were automatically failed due to maintenance conditions including having no water flow, standing water in basins, and general uncleanliness. Several lawns in the park received poor scores due to litter and maintenance issues. Some features in Harlem River Park were automatically failed due to particularly dangerous and unsanitary conditions: park pathways, and half of the lawns, were automatically failed due to the presence of human feces and used condoms.

Yet maintenance attention alone cannot solve the poor conditions present at Harlem River Park. The athletic fields are in need of special synthetic turf maintenance: surveyors found multiple uneven sections,



*Harlem River Park is cut off from the neighborhood by streets and highway bridges.*

and many gaps and holes in the playing surfaces. Fences and bleachers were also found to be in poor condition in this park. Perhaps most importantly, Harlem River Park has no bathroom. It was not penalized for not having one, but the effects from the absence of this vital amenity are reflected in the dangerous and unsanitary conditions found elsewhere in the park.

## Sara D. Roosevelt Park

Poor maintenance practices contributed to several low-scoring park features in Sara D. Roosevelt Park. Bathrooms in the park scored 60 out of 100, because of dirty conditions and graffiti observed within the facilities. In addition, several key amenities within the bathrooms did not work, including stall doors that did not close, and toilets that did not operate. Drinking Fountains in the park scored 22 out of 100. Four out of the six fountains automatically failed due to conditions stemming from poor maintenance, such as the presence of algae and standing water in the fountain basins.

Capital problems also contributed to poor scores in the Sara D. Roosevelt Park evaluation. One field was under construction when NY4P surveyed Sara D. Roosevelt Park, however a second asphalt athletic field within the park was automatically failed, as the playing surface has significant structural deterioration. Playgrounds in the park



*This popular neighborhood park is aging and does not have adequate maintenance.*

scored 48 out of 100, with one playground automatically failing due to missing play equipment, dangerous areas in need of repair, and haphazard safety surfacing that creates slip and trip hazards.



# Recommendations



# Recommendations

## 1. Expand Park Investment Programs

NY4P recommends that NYC Parks expand the scope and reach of the Community Parks Initiative to prioritize investment and steer resources to all park within the CPI zones, regardless of size.

NYC Parks has two terrific programs intended to prioritize parks with the highest needs and greatest reach for capital investment: the Anchor Parks program and CPI. The Anchor Parks program, which was announced in August 2016, identified one park in each borough to receive \$30 million for a complete capital transformation. CPI has targeted 60 parks and playgrounds located in 55 underserved neighborhoods for improvement since launching in 2014. In reaching for greater equity in how public resources are allocated, these programs are bringing much-needed attention to the right communities, but by only including small parks and playgrounds in CPI, the city is leaving more important parks out of the picture. We know that larger-sized parks – what we are calling neighborhood parks – really strengthen a community, providing



*Only small parks like Astoria Health Playground in Queens have been the focus of CPI.*

spaces for active play, sports, and family gatherings, as well as places to be quiet, contemplative, and connected to the natural world all at once. Despite their importance, these critical neighborhood parks are often overlooked in New York City's parks system: while they are large enough to serve diverse groups of park users, they are often too small to be a borough-wide or city-wide draw.

In neighborhood parks throughout the CPI priority zones, NY4P found consistent maintenance issues and aging, worn infrastructure in need of renovation or replacement. Too many of New York City's neighborhood parks in these zones will continue to languish unless they are awarded transformative capital change. The de Blasio administration has created very successful models for that change, and should seize the opportunity to expand them.

## 2. Hire Maintenance Staff

To keep our parks clean and well cared-for, NYC Parks must add more full-time maintenance and operations staff for day-to-day work in parks.

NY4P commends the recent efforts by NYC Parks to manage staffing through innovative techniques that improve the efficiency and timeliness of staff deployment; however we believe that the agency needs more full-time, on the ground staff to be permanent resources in our city parks. For example, NYC Parks is studying the proven best practice of zone management, but that will only work with enough permanent, trained employees.

The conditions found by NY4P field surveyors show that current levels of service are not keeping all of our parks clean and safe. However, many of the noted conditions can be resolved by daily service crews working for NYC parks in maintenance and operations titles. Adding more City Park Workers (CPWs) for neighborhood park maintenance will ensure more frequent and more responsive attention is available throughout the city. Seasonal workers were added to the agency's payroll in the past fiscal year, which greatly helped with the annual shortage of workers in neighborhood parks staff that is created by



*Skilled park workers like Haywood Lige are key to clean and safe parks.*

the openings of the beaches and pools, but there is a real need for permanent, trained maintenance & operations staff throughout the city.

Expanding the NYC Parks workforce at this level dovetails with several goals and initiatives outlined in the de Blasio administration's long-range policy plan, OneNYC, which lays out goals for quality-of-life measures, including close access to open spaces, and stronger community socio-economic resiliency. NY4P believes that the full-time employment opportunities that could be created through NYC Parks are just the kind of well-paying, stable and green jobs that policy-makers across the board have an interest in creating to close the equity gap and create resilience in communities.

### 3. Improve Parks Access by Fixing Key Infrastructure

NYC Parks must improve the critical park infrastructure needed in neighborhood parks to make parks useable for residents of all ages and abilities: drinking fountains and bathrooms.

Adding bathrooms to parks that lack permanent facilities will improve conditions in neighborhood parks across the city, and make the sites more friendly and accessible for seniors, families, and everyone else in between. Seven of the 35 parks in this report do not have permanent bathroom facilities and three additional parks are only served by restricted-access bathroom facilities, such as recreation center bathrooms.

The City is planning to improve the existing comfort stations at one of the parks surveyed, Betsy Head Park in Brooklyn, but nearly a third of the parks surveyed for this report lack permanent public bathroom facilities. In some parks without permanent bathroom facilities, NY4P surveyors documented the presence of human waste. This unsanitary condition, in addition to being a public health hazard,



*Not all parks have accessible, clean, permanent bathrooms.*

affects overall usership and lowers visitor numbers. Park bathrooms are maintained by daily service crews, but also need specially trained plumbing professionals in-house, or contracted independent plumbers to keep these everyday park features in good working order. Additional plumbing staff is also needed to keep seasonal fixtures like spray showers and drinking fountains in good repair. With clean, functional bathrooms, all of our parks can be true community resources to users of ages and abilities.

NY4P supports the de Blasio administration's goal to install or repair 500 water fountains citywide, and we suggest using a Requirements Contract to replace the aging water fountains found in our city parks. Throughout our years of producing report cards, NY4P has found an unacceptable number of fountains with little or no water pressure, but also an unaccept-

able amount of water fountains with conditions that repel users – from flooding in basins and on nearby ground, to the presence of algae and graffiti. NYC Parks has a new design for water fountains that eliminates many of the persistent conditions that keep parks visitors from using older fountains that have been successfully installed at several beaches, and we recommend that the city replace older fountains with new models adapted for ADA accessibility.

### 4. Renew Sara D. Roosevelt Park

Sara D. Roosevelt Park needs significant capital improvements, as well as increased maintenance attention.

At over 80 years old, Sara D. Roosevelt Park is an incredibly successful, well-loved urban park. With multiple playgrounds, athletic areas, passive recreational space, and community gardens, “Sara D.” is highly popular and heavily used. The low score the park received in this Report Card points to the day-to-day consequences of its popularity and to the need for additional maintenance as well as comprehensive capital renewal.



*Aging infrastructure, like this synthetic turf, are not living up to park usage at Sara D. Roosevelt Park.*

Recent small-scale improvements have transformed sections of Sara D. Roosevelt Park, creating vibrant, multi-generational spaces. These success stories include the renovated Hester Street Playground, a new synthetic turf field in partnership with Nike at Stanton Street, and a restored park building at Delancey Street which houses the BRC Senior Center. The popularity of these features proves that any improvement made to Sara D. Roosevelt Park will have a tremendous value for the neighborhood.

However, not all parts of Sara D. Roosevelt Park shine. Remaining athletic fields, playgrounds, and many pathways show wear-and-tear signs of heavy use, and are in need of refurbishment. It is clear that the current maintenance capacity of NYC

<sup>1</sup> The Stanton Street field was under construction at the time of this survey, and is not included as part of Sara D. Roosevelt Park's evaluation.

# Recommendations (continued)

Parks is not meeting the operational needs of this property. Adding maintenance staff and plumbers will improve daily conditions of critical features, like comfort stations and spray showers. The remaining park buildings should be restored to uses by the public. Sara D. Roosevelt Park is a perfect site for capital improvements: it is a very heavily used neighborhood park serving several high-needs communities, providing much-needed open space in a dense area of the city.

## 5.

### Invest in Harlem River Park

The City must commit both increased maintenance staff hours to Harlem River Park, as well as capital funds to construct a much-needed bathroom in addition to connecting the park to the nearby Harlem River Esplanade.

Though the park dates from 1867, recent multi-million-dollar capital projects renovated the property within the last decade, converting the park athletic fields to synthetic turf. The ballfields and other athletic facilities at Harlem River Park are very popular and attract very heavy use, which NY4P surveyors noted in wear-and-tear evidence on drinking fountains, lawns, and athletic fields. Despite having



*This pitcher's mound shows the severe maintenance needs present at Harlem River Park.*

popularity, Harlem River Park lacks a comfort station on site. This inconveniences the thousands of park visitors, including citywide leagues, who depend on this popular park for organized sports and active recreation.

When the section of parkland along the waterfront from 132nd Street to 125th Street is built and connected to the existing northern sections of the Harlem River Esplanade and to Harlem River Park, the joined open spaces will encourage more visitors and discourage homelessness, an ongoing problem for both parks. The City must follow through with the commitment made to the East Harlem community, where more residential development is being contemplated by the Department of City Planning, and build the missing section of the park.

# Appendices



# Park Exterior Scores

As seen in the oldest parks in New York City to the most recently designed public plazas, sidewalks and fences have been used to create a clear division of space, separating the retreat offered by our shared open spaces from the streets and neighborhoods that surround them. That design philosophy is changing as more planners and designers recognize that for residents and users, the city's parks do not end at the sidewalk. Drawing on best practices in urban design, NYC Parks is blurring this spatial division, seeking to create more welcoming liminal spaces by redesigning entrances and allowing passive uses to blend into the surrounding sidewalk spaces. This strategy will inform future park designs, and is the impetus behind eight park entrance renovations targeted for capital improvement under the "Parks Without Borders" program.

Regardless of their design, all sidewalks adjacent to New York City park properties are the maintenance responsibility of NYC Parks. Often consisting of no more than pavers and trees, park sidewalks are cared for by the same daily maintenance crews which service the park proper. As such, these sections should be included in the inspection protocol for future Report Cards.

To test data collection in these exterior park spaces, NY4P surveyors collected data for park-adjacent sidewalks at each park property bounded by a traversable sidewalk. Two Major Service areas were included, where relevant: Pathways and Trees. Data on park exteriors was collected at 26 sites.

<i>Major Service Area</i>	<i>Score</i>
Trees	81
Sidewalks (Pathways)	95

For future surveys, park exteriors must be counted towards the parks' overall score. It is imperative to keep the data collection separate, as these areas are in a time of transition in the public eye.

# Weekend Scores

The data collection for this Report Card has been restricted to weekdays, mirroring the inspection program conducted by NYC Parks. Anecdotal evidence suggests that conditions at most neighborhood parks are very poor during high-season weekends. To test this hypothesis, NY4P surveyors conducted a pilot project to collect data on weekend days during the summer survey season. Surveyors revisited nine parks on Saturdays during the data collection period, using the standard Report Card method to evaluate the parks.

Surveyors successfully collected data at each of the nine parks, finding conditions that were similar to those found upon each park's initial, weekday visit.

<i>Major Service Area</i>	<i>Score</i>
Athletic Fields	82
Bathrooms	50
Courts	85
Drinking Fountains	52
Immediate Environment	83
Lawns	74
Natural Areas	88
Pathways	86
Playgrounds	77
Sitting Areas	74
Trees	76
Water Bodies	43

Major Service Areas with the lowest scores included bathrooms and drinking fountains, which are consistently found in Report Card analyses to have maintenance and cleanliness needs. Water Bodies were the lowest-scoring major service area surveyed on weekends: because of the small sample size of this analysis, certain water bodies with very poor maintenance affected the score greatly.

The scores revealed by this data collection and analysis do not suggest a marked difference in park condition between weekdays and weekends. However, the small sample size prevents a clear conclusion from being drawn. NY4P surveyors were able to successfully collect data among weekend visitation conditions at nine parks, suggesting that NYC Parks Inspection staff would also be able to collect data on weekends. Expanding the Parks Inspection Program to weekend data collection will generate data on a much larger scale than NY4P is capable of undertaking. Additionally, it will enable NYC Parks to accurately shift maintenance schedules to accommodate the levels of use, and the conditions created by, weekend visitorship.

# Detailed Methodology

To expand weekend data collection at NY4P, the Report Card method must be modified. Specific target observation areas should be mapped, numbered, and referred to, enabling predictable replicability of observations with changing survey staff. Adding this layer of accountability will allow one team to survey on a weekday, and a second team to return to the same observation sites on weekends, creating comparable results.

This section describes in detail the methodology used by New Yorkers for Parks in creating the Report Card on Parks. The methods are derived from New Yorkers for Parks’ award-winning Report Card on Parks survey methodology, first implemented in 2003. In 2005, the Report Card on Parks received a Community Indicators Award from the Community Indicators Consortium and the Brookings Institution’s Urban Markets Initiative.

## Survey Population

In constructing the 2016 Report Card on Parks, NY4P focused on NYC Parks properties between one and twenty acres in size. These “neighborhood parks” provide recreation and relaxation amenities for New York City communities and New Yorkers of all ages and abilities. NY4P did not survey parks that were closed for capital improvement. Further, certain park properties, like skating rinks, amusement parks, or forests without user trails have no major service areas, and were excluded from the report.

**Table 1: Major Service Areas & Relative Weights**

<i>Major Service Areas</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Weight</i>
Active Recreation	Evaluates all athletic fields and courts in a park.	3
Athletic fields	include natural grass, asphalt, and synthetic surfaces.	3
Drinking Fountains	Evaluates each discrete drinking fountain in a park.	3
Pathways	Evaluates each type of walkway in a park.	3
Bathrooms	Evaluates each bathroom in a park.	4
Passive Greenspace	Evaluates every lawn, landscaped area, garden, water body, natural area and tree pit in a park.	5
Playgrounds	Evaluates all playground areas and playground equipment in a park.	5
Sitting Areas	Evaluates each discrete sitting area in a park.	5
Immediate Environment	Measures how well a park is insulated from potential negative impacts of its surroundings. Intrusive odors, emissions, exhaust, and excessive noise are monitored.	3

To further limit the survey universe, NY4P removed all NYC Parks properties that were located outside the Community Parks Initiative Zones, and those properties within the zones that were less than five acres in size. The resulting 35 parks are the survey population, of which 26 had been surveyed in a previous Report Card.

## Identification & Weighting of Major Service Areas

In 2001, when constructing the Report Card on Parks, NY4P took a user-focused approach to identify eight Major Service Areas (MSAs) affecting a park user’s experience. A focus group of park experts, community leaders and public officials was convened to help define eight MSAs, along with a scale of weights to reflect the

relative importance of different indicators. Focus group participants and park users at Brooklyn’s Prospect Park were asked to rate the MSAs on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 having the least impact on their park experience, and 5 being the most critical. Participants also provided feedback on the structure and composition of the MSAs. The rankings provided were then averaged and rounded to the nearest whole number to provide a final MSA relative weight figure. See Table 1 for MSA weights.

## Feature Forms

In 2001, NY4P staff, in cooperation with statistical consultants from the firm of Ernst & Young, developed question forms for the Report Card on Parks with which to evaluate the MSAs found in each park. Individual questions were designed to measure the performance of the features in each MSA in the following categories:

- Maintenance
- Cleanliness
- Safety
- Structural Integrity.

Whenever possible, feature form questions were adapted from NYC Parks' own internal evaluation mechanism, the Parks Inspection Program (PIP). During the development of the Report Card on Parks, a second focus group was asked to designate each of the individual form questions as 'priority' or 'routine.' Priority ratings refer to those conditions of a park feature necessary for its safe use. Secondly, the focus group rated questions tagged as routine on a scale from 1 to 5.

## Numerical Scores

Each completed feature form was assigned a numerical grade between 0 and 100. Any park feature receiving an 'unacceptable' rating on any priority question was automatically assigned a form grade of zero. However, in the large majority of completed forms, park features received 'acceptable' ratings on priority questions. In these cases, all non-priority questions were scored as acceptable, not acceptable or not applicable. Following the guidelines of the focus group, each applicable form question was assigned a weight of 1 through 5.

Form scores were calculated as the weighted ratio of questions scored acceptable to those scored acceptable or unacceptable. This number was then multiplied by 100 to give a final form score.

Once each form is scored, MSA ratings were calculated. Scored forms were grouped by MSA. Those MSAs with exactly one corresponding completed form type were allotted the numerical score of that single form. For example, the "Drinking Fountain" MSA is comprised solely of the "Drinking Fountain" feature form. Thus, the "Drinking Fountain" MSA score is identical to the "Drinking Fountain" feature form score. MSAs comprised of more than one feature form were scored according to a weighted average of the corresponding form scores, as follows:

Suppose  $C_1, C_s, \dots, C_n$  are the  $n$ -many form scores corresponding to a given MSA. Let  $D_1, D_s, \dots, D_n$  be those forms' corresponding relative weights. MSA numerical scores were calculated as the following quotient:

$$\frac{(C_1 * D_1 + C_s * D_s + \dots + C_n * D_n)}{(D_1 + D_s + \dots + D_n)}$$

Each park's raw score was calculated in a similar fashion. Suppose  $E_1, E_2, \dots, E_m$  were a park's MSA scores with corresponding weights  $F_1, F_2, \dots, F_m$ . Final raw scores were then calculated as the following quotient:

$$\frac{(E_1 * F_1 + E_s * F_s + \dots + E_m * F_m)}{(F_1 + F_s + \dots + F_m)}$$

The raw score for each beach was calculated in a similar fashion to MSA scores. MSAs present for any given beach were weighted following the guidelines of the focus groups. These weighted figures were then averaged to give an overall beach score.

The survey is designed to fairly rate all features that are or should be available to a user visiting a particular park. For example, if a park's bathroom is locked or closed without explanation, it would receive a "0" score for the Bathroom rating. However, if the park does not have a bathroom, it would not receive any score for Bathrooms, so no park will be penalized for not having a particular major service area.

Applying this numerical score to the letter grades listed in Table 5, it can be seen that a score of 83 corresponds to a grade of "B".



### Sample Calculation—Beach 17 Playground, Queens

**Table 2: Summary of Beach 17 Playground Form Data**

Form	Form Scores	Form Score Average
Playgrounds	100, 100, 100, 83	96
Immediate Environment	77	77
Lawns and Landscaped Areas	84	84
Park Trees	86	86
Sitting Areas	100, 100, 100, 87, 81, 73	90
Bathrooms	100, 83	92
Drinking Fountains	100, 100, 100, 82, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0	32
Athletic Fields (grass)	79	79
Pathways	100	100

**Table 3: Summary of Beach 17 Playground MSA Data**

MSA	Calculation	MSA Score
Playgrounds	Form score average from Table 3	96
Immediate Environment	Form score from Table 3	77
Passive Greenspace	(Lawns, Landscaped Areas*2 + Park Trees*1) / 3	85
Sitting Areas	Form score average from Table 3	90
Bathrooms	Form score average from Table 3	92
Drinking Fountains	Form score average from Table 3	32
Active Recreation	Form score from Table 3	79
Pathways	Form score from Table 3	100

**Table 3: Calculation of Raw Score and Letter Grade—Beach 17 Playground**

MSA	MSA Score times Weight
Playgrounds	96 * 5 = 478 (with rounding)
Immediate Environment	77 * 3 = 232 (with rounding)
Passive Greenspace	85 * 5 = 425
Sitting Areas	90 * 5 = 451 (with rounding)
Bathrooms	92 * 4 = 366 (with rounding)
Drinking Fountains	32 * 3 = 96
Active Recreation	79 * 3 = 236 (with rounding)
Pathways	100 * 3 = 300
Total	2583 (with rounding)

This total, 2583, was then divided by the sum of the weights of the eight MSAs. This sum is 31, so that the raw park score for Beach 17 Playground is  $2583/31 = 83.3$ .

Applying this numerical score to the letter grades listed in Table 5, it can be seen that a score of 83 corresponds to a grade of “B”.

## Converting Numerical Scores to Letter Grades

During the creation of the Report Card on Parks, a fourth focus group of park managers and open space experts was convened to determine the assignment of letter grades to raw scores. Participants were brought to three parks and asked to provide a letter grade for the park based on a brief description of the MSAs and a tour of the park. These letter grades were consistent with the raw number scores for the parks and resulted in the raw score/grade assignment chart.

**Table 5: Converting Raw Scores to Letter Grades**

Raw Numerical Grade	Letter Grade	Category
97-100	A+	EXCELLENT
93-96	A	
90-92	A-	
87-89	B+	VERY GOOD
83-86	B	
80-82	B-	
77-79	C+	SATISFACTORY
73-76	C	
70-72	C-	
60-69	D	CHALLENGED
59 and below	F	UNSATISFACTORY

## Survey Data Collection

Survey work for the 2016 Report Card on Parks took place Tuesdays through Thursdays in July and August 2015 from the hours of 10 AM to 4 PM. NY4P senior staff held a full-day training session to train surveyors in the following techniques: use of the tablets; delineation of beach features and transects; use of maps, measuring wheels, survey forms and standards manual; and procedures for documenting features with digital cameras. The training session included a step-by-step review of park surveying, collection of data according to defined standards, proper photo documentation, safety procedures, and procedures for storing data in the Report Card database upon completion of survey.

In the field, surveyors used tablet computers to complete a feature form for each feature found in a given park. For example, for each drinking fountain in a park, a “Drinking Fountain” form was completed so that in a park with three fountains, a surveyor would complete three “Drinking Fountain” feature forms. Additionally, surveyors would complete a form for every playground space within natural and/or constructed boundaries, for every bathroom, for every naturally bounded lawn or landscaped area, etc.

In addition to completing the survey forms, surveyors took extensive digital photographs to support and complement survey results. All survey findings and feature forms receive an identification number and are correlated to a series of photographs documenting conditions for each beach in the survey. Survey results and photo documentation are stored in a central database. When photo documentation did not correlate with results or did not adequately illustrate park conditions, the park was re-visited and re-evaluated by surveyors.

NY4P designed the Report Card on Parks methodology in 2003 to serve two functions. First, the report provided a mechanism to provide an instantaneous snapshot of the conditions of New York City parks. This allows for real-time comparison among parks to identify those that showcase best practices, as well as in-need parks that require attention. In addition, the methodology was designed to be replicated annually, so that trends at the individual level, as well as borough- and city-wide, could be documented and addressed.

This document is the first Report Card on Parks for neighborhood-sized parks since 2007. At the time of data collection for the 2007 Report Card, Bathroom and Athletic Field feature forms were modified significantly from earlier iterations of the methodology. In constructing the methodology for the 2016 Report Card on Parks, NY4P staff sought to fine-tune the survey mechanism. Minor clarification and wording changes were made to feature forms, and no major modifications were made.

## **Other Inspections of NYC Parks**

NYC Parks evaluates its properties using the Parks Inspection Program (PIP). While PIP rates sites from a park management perspective, the survey used in the Report Card was designed from the park user's perspective. By listing ratings and feature performance by park, NY4P's Report Card is intended to provide a comparative analysis of park conditions as an easy-to-use tool for communities and park users.

In addition, the two inspection programs evaluate park properties in different ways. For example, the Report Card evaluates and scores Bathrooms and Drinking Fountains. Although NYC Parks tracks those features through PIP, they do not influence a park's PIP score.





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*New Yorkers for Parks is the citywide independent organization championing quality parks and open spaces for all New Yorkers in all neighborhoods.*

*Parks are essential to the health of residents, the livability of neighborhoods, and the economic development of the city. Through our integrated approach of research, advocacy and strategic partnerships, we drive immediate actions and long-term policies that protect and enhance the city's vast network of parks, ensure equitable access to quality open spaces for all neighborhoods, and inform and empower communities throughout New York City. Information on New Yorkers for Parks' research and projects is available at [www.ny4p.org](http://www.ny4p.org)*

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