



Independence you can rely on

LAURA DOUD



Park Maintenance Audit Report

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Contents

- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 1**
- I. CURRENT CONDITION OF PARK TREES AND LANDSCAPE 3**
- II. AUDIT ISSUES..... 8**
 - Finding #1. The City developed new parks, improved existing parks and added new trees, but did not increase funding required to maintain them. Instead, contractors were asked to provide the same level of service over a greater area. 8*
 - Finding #2. The City has focused on the expansion of parks, open space, and recreational opportunities, but has not adequately considered how these areas are to be maintained. 14*
 - Finding #3. After the City purchased over \$215,000 worth of relatively new vehicles and landscape maintenance equipment from a prior landscape maintenance vendor, the equipment was left unused in the City yard for several years and allowed it to depreciate in value. 18*
 - Finding #4. The scope of work defined in the City’s landscape maintenance contracts had not been representative of the actual work being performed, making it difficult for the City to effectively monitor the contractors’ work..... 19*
 - Finding #5. Lax oversight of invoice documentation resulted in the City paying nearly \$81,000 over 16 months for maintenance service that was never performed.21*
 - Finding #6. The City is unable to accurately track over \$138,000 of irrigation parts inventory.24*
- IV. BACKGROUND26**
- V. OBJECTIVE, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY29**
- VI. APPENDICES30**
 - Appendix A. County of San Diego, Parks and Recreation Naming Rights Opportunities Program*
 - Appendix B. San Francisco’s Park Evaluation Program*
 - Appendix C. Management Comments*

Executive Summary

The City is expanding park land and adding trees while conditions decline.

Recognizing the essential role of parks and trees in creating and sustaining healthy and livable communities in Long Beach, the City Auditor's Office completed an audit of park tree and landscape maintenance covering activities from FY 2013 through FY 2015. The City outsources to private contractors to maintain over 29,500 trees and nearly 2,000 acres of grounds in City parks, facilities and street medians. The Parks, Recreation and Marine Department (PRM or Department) is charged with overseeing these contractors and approving payments of over \$3.1 million annually to them.

We found that the condition of the City's parks and park trees will continue to worsen unless the City changes its approach to managing these assets. The City has been shortsighted in its approach to maintaining its parks and trees, focusing on park expansion without increasing the funding necessary to provide adequate ongoing maintenance for these new areas. Coupled with external factors, particularly the Governor's mandates on water reduction that have had a major impact on tree and landscape conditions, the City's current management approach exacerbates declining conditions.

Tree and landscape maintenance activities are necessary to the viability and longevity of the City's parks and trees. Adequate maintenance levels can save the City money in the long run, as deferred maintenance can lead to costly repairs in the future. As the City adds more parks and trees, these maintenance efforts become increasingly more important.

DECLINING CONDITIONS

1 in 4 park trees are dead or in poor or critical condition.

The current condition of parks and park trees is declining. A recent inventory study estimated the cumulative value of the City's park trees at over \$112 million, but found that 27% of park trees are dead, or in poor or critical condition. During our audit timeframe, we found that trash and weeds were consistent problems at the City's parks. Athletic fields with uneven terrain often created poor playing conditions. The antiquated irrigation system within many of our parks regularly failed, and contributed to inconsistent irrigation of turf and grounds, as well as standing water.

Weeds, trash and irrigation failures are repetitive problems.

LESS AND LESS MAINTENANCE

There is an estimated \$1 million shortfall for park and tree maintenance.

By adding more areas to be maintained without increasing funding, the City has been tasking landscape maintenance contractors with maintaining more with the same amount of resources. Furthermore, funding for tree maintenance has historically been limited to an emergency, as-needed basis, short of the needed level of tree trimming every four to five years. Since the awarding of the landscape maintenance contracts in 2013, the City added 11 medians, 7 facilities, and 16 parks and park improvements without any additional increases to maintenance contract funding. We estimated that the

the funding shortfall for landscape maintenance and park tree trimming was approximately \$1,013,000 per year. This amount does not include irrigation needs or park amenities and facilities.

The total cost of the irrigation system renovation is estimated at \$113 million.

The City Manager's Office recently estimated that the renovation of the deteriorating park irrigation system would cost \$113 million and projected a budgetary shortfall of \$20 million annually for ongoing maintenance of park grounds and park facilities, which encompass other aging park assets that were outside the scope of this audit, including playgrounds, walkways and other paved surfaces, fountains, community centers, fencing, benches, and tables, among other items.

CHANGES UNDERWAY

PRM has recently made strides in improving contract oversight of grounds maintenance work, and in securing additional funding to maintain added sites.

Towards the end of audit fieldwork, we communicated our findings to PRM management, which later informed us that the Department would begin to address the landscape maintenance shortfall. In April 2016, PRM requested Council to increase the aggregate amount of the two landscape maintenance contracts by \$359,000 annually to service the parks, medians and other facilities that were added to the City's inventory since 2013. Another \$351,000 was requested as a contingency for the maintenance of future parks and facilities. Based on our estimate of funding needs for the current service locations, there potentially remains a yearly shortfall of at least \$503,000 for landscape maintenance and \$151,000 for tree trimming.

In addition to these funding issues, we addressed other areas of concern, including the lack of measurable performance metrics related to park conditions and maintenance, the need to improve day-to-day contract performance monitoring, and the lack of adequate internal controls over contract management. During audit fieldwork, new PRM maintenance management began improving the monitoring of contract activities, including standardizing the evaluation of the contractors' work, streamlining PRM communication with contractors, and exploring the use of new technologies. Since these changes were implemented after the audit period, we did not audit and assess them in detail. Furthermore, PRM management has indicated that it will be developing a new strategic plan that will include discussion of the long-term maintenance needs of parks and trees.

CONCLUSION

A more long-term and concerted strategic approach to maintaining and protecting the City's parks and trees is necessary.

We thank the Department's staff for their assistance, patience and cooperation during this audit. We also commend PRM for making progress in responding to these issues, and hope that this effort will be sustained for the long-term. Our trees and parks play a critical role in creating and sustaining healthy, livable communities in Long Beach. Therefore, decisions on investment in our park system and urban forest by the Department, City Management and City Council should not be made without serious consideration of their long-term financial and operational implications.

I. Current Condition of Park Trees and Landscape

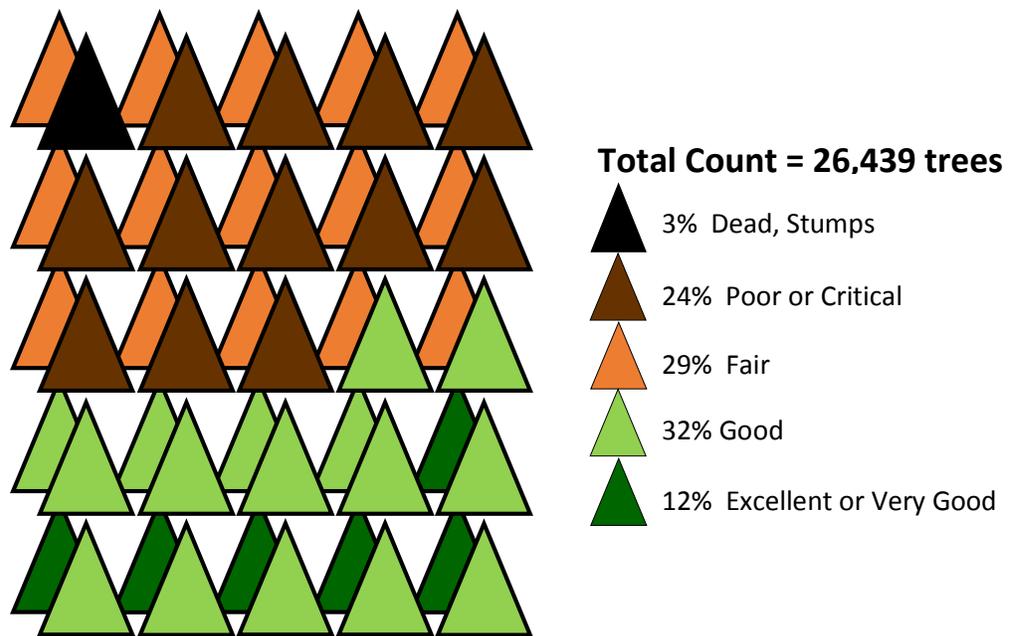
The current condition of the City's park landscape and trees is declining. There are widespread health issues with the City's park trees. Park landscape conditions are also lagging, with various stakeholders acknowledging system-wide issues, such as weeds and trash, poor sports turf, and inconsistent irrigation.

TREES

One in four park trees are in poor or critical condition.

A park tree inventory study was conducted in 2015 by a contractor for the first time on trees in the City's parks.¹ The results of the study were alarming. **Of the approximately 26,000 park trees in the inventory, 7,100 trees (or 27%) are dead or in poor or critical condition, as shown in Figure 1 below. Another 7,700 park trees (29%) are in fair condition.** This means that less than one-half of park trees (44%) are in good, very good or excellent condition. The study also identified 2,000 trees recommended for removal.

**Figure 1.
Park Tree Conditions**



The drought has played a role in the conditions identified in the inventory study. The lack of appropriate amounts of water has put further strain on the health of the trees, increasing their susceptibility to pests and diseases, and making them more vulnerable to the weather, particularly high winds that can bring down trees and large branches.

¹ Conducted by West Coast Arborist in 2015, the tree inventory was performed for parks in the Uplands area, which is the entire City except for the Tidelands area, which includes Rainbow Lagoon, Bixby, Bluff, Marine, Alamitos, and Lincoln Parks. A Tidelands park tree inventory has not been recently conducted.

As part of our audit effort, we sampled 39 parks citywide and documented tree conditions. Our observations confirmed the results of the study, as seen in the photographs below. We found dead/dying trees, tree stumps that had not been removed, and many trees with fallen or broken limbs – some of them significantly large.



Recreation



El Dorado Area 3



Silverado



Somerset

GROUPS AND LANDSCAPE

Stakeholder Views

Landscape conditions do not meet stakeholder expectations.

Weeds, trash and irrigation failures are repetitive problems.

Through interviews or an online survey, many park stakeholders – which include City staff, PRM Commissioners, citizens, park users, and contractors – expressed different levels of dissatisfaction with park landscape conditions. While expectations are not well-defined, the consensus was that improvement is needed to stop the decline in conditions.

- Because the City added more parks and other areas with grounds and landscape to be maintained without corresponding increases to the maintenance contract amounts, PRM staff and contractors stated that the number of contract employees assigned to the City are not enough to perform all contract work to an acceptable level and that some service

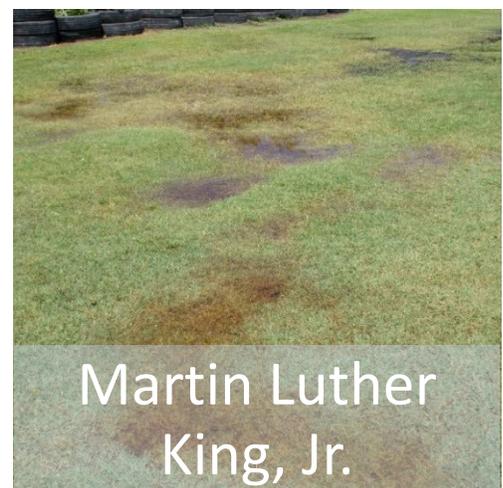
frequencies – such as weed abatement and trash pickup – are too low for the needs of various locations. **Documentation maintained by PRM regarding contractor performance repeatedly identified consistent problems regarding weeds, trash and irrigation failures, which accounted for 75% of issues identified from January to June 2015.**

- Local sports groups that frequently use the City’s athletic fields expressed a desire for better park conditions to meet their needs. **Seven out of ten sports groups were dissatisfied with turf conditions, emphasizing that poor turf conditions expose players to injury and require them to supplement with their own maintenance activities.**
 - According to PRM staff and contractors, key turf maintenance activities such as aeration and irrigation audits were bypassed in certain areas during our audit period, likely because contractors had been trying to provide a minimal level of maintenance services across larger acreage.
 - In addition, overuse of athletic fields has caused significant damage to turf. Due to the high demand, there is little down time and longer periods of recovery needed for turf renovation.
- Parks & Recreation Commissioners expressed that park conditions are not ideal, emphasizing poor turf and tree health. They attribute the current state of the City’s parks and trees primarily to budget constraints.

Observations

Our observations at a sample of 39 parks citywide confirmed what other stakeholders had identified as issues with landscape conditions. We found weeds, trash, inconsistent irrigation, including severely water logged turf, and uneven turf. The conditions we observed, when compared to contract specifications, suggest substandard conditions. The pictures below represent only a few of these instances we observed.

- **IRRIGATION:** According to the contract, Section 10.2, irrigation systems shall be adjusted to provide adequate coverage, minimize runoff, limit hazardous conditions, and prevent over irrigating one area. All malfunctions shall be recorded and timely corrective action taken. However, we observed several instances of water-logged turf with standing water, such as the example shown in this photograph of Martin Luther King, Jr. Park.



- **TURFGRASS:** According to the contract, Section 10.3.A, turf grass should appear level, having a smooth surface appearance with clean edges, and be at least 90% in health and viability. However, we observed numerous parks with uneven turf, patches of dirt, and extensive weeds. Such conditions can be hazardous to those using the area, as shown here at Cherry Park.



- **LITTER AND DEBRIS/ CLEAN-UP:** Section 10.11 calls for the contractor to provide general clean-up on a daily basis for the purpose of picking up papers, trash, or debris which may accumulate in the landscape areas, lakes, on all sidewalks and other hardscapes within the site. At various locations, we found that trash was left on the ground even when trash cans were emptied. Some parks had medicinal marijuana paraphernalia and broken glass near playgrounds.



- **WEED CONTROL:** Section 10.9.A states that the City expects all areas to be kept weed-free to the greatest extent possible. All weeds should be addressed on a regular basis to make weed control easier, as well as to provide for a clean look throughout the parks and medians. We also found weed problems at various park locations, including sports fields. This photograph shows widespread weeds found at the Marina Vista field.



EFFECT OF THE DROUGHT

The statewide drought has had an impact on tree and landscape conditions. In April 2015, Governor Brown issued an Executive Order implementing water restrictions statewide. Long Beach received a reduction target on potable or drinking water of 16% from the City's 2013 total water usage levels. That Executive Order also specifically prohibited the City from irrigating ornamental turf on public street medians with potable water, which also affects the watering of trees on those street medians. These Executive Orders apply restrictions to the usage of potable water.

As shown in Table 1 below, according to PRM, the City has a total of 1,275 acres of parks and street medians that require irrigation. Currently, of this total, 687 acres (54%) are watered with reclaimed or recycled water, while the remaining 588 acres (46%) are watered with potable water. According to PRM, expanding the use of reclaimed water in the City would require additional infrastructure to accommodate a water reclamation system.

**Table 1.
Irrigated Parks and Medians**

Irrigated Parks and Medians	Acres	% of Total
Total parks and street medians that are irrigated	1,275	100%
<i>Irrigated with reclaimed water</i>	687	54%
<i>Irrigated with potable water</i>	588	46%

Besides eliminating the potable watering of street median grass, the City has been employing other conservation measures, including better maintenance of the irrigation system and implementing a modified watering schedule for most areas. Other initiatives include installing synthetic turf fields and converting grass medians to tolerant landscaping.

In May 2016, Governor Brown issued another Executive Order establishing longer-term conservation measures, including permanent water use reporting and efficiency targets, as well as banning wasteful practices such as hosing sidewalks, driveways, and other hardscapes with potable water. As part of these provisions, new water use targets will be developed, but it is not immediately evident how this will affect Long Beach.

The drought will continue to have a major effect on park and tree conditions. The City's total water usage must remain at reduced levels, while it appears that the City will continue to make park improvements and add new parks, trees, street medians and other grounds that require water and maintenance.

II. Audit Issues

Finding #1. *The City developed new parks, improved existing parks and added new trees, but did not increase funding required to maintain them. Instead, contractors were asked to provide the same level of service over a greater area.*

TREE & LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE FUNDING

At least another \$1 million annually is needed to provide adequate tree and landscape maintenance.

To appropriately accommodate newly improved parks and added parks, facilities, and street medians, we estimated the minimum funding shortfall for landscape maintenance and park tree trimming at \$1,013,239 per year, as shown in Table 2 below. Operationally speaking, **this annual funding gap is equivalent to a staffing gap of 19.5 FTEs (full-time equivalents) annually, which would mean a need for an additional 20 full-time contract workers to adequately maintain current service areas.** Our estimated maintenance funding gap is comprised of four components:

- 1) Minimum funds to restore 2009 services levels for existing parks and locations, as the current contract resulted in key service reductions.
- 2) Cost of maintaining new parks and other areas added to the City since the execution of the 2013 contract.
- 3) Cost of maintaining locations that are not in the 2013 contract but are being maintained by the contractors.
- 4) Cost of trimming park trees according to a five-year cycle.

**Table 2.
Minimum Estimated Funding Gap
Landscape and Tree Maintenance Contracts**

Component of Park Maintenance	Amount Needed	Contractor Staffing Needed (FTEs)
Grounds/Landscape Maintenance Contract		
1) Restoration of service levels to 2009 contract levels*	\$336,187	7
2) Maintenance of parks and other areas added since execution of 2013 contract**	\$358,674	7
3) Maintenance of locations not in the contract but are being maintained*	\$167,186	3
Subtotal	\$862,047	17
4) Tree Maintenance Contract	\$151,192	3
Total	\$1,013,239	20

*Amount calculated or estimated by City Auditor's Office.

**Amount supplied by PRM, per April 2016 amendment.

With the shortfall in funding, overall service levels have declined. Although PRM indicated that the goal for landscape maintenance activities was to maintain current service levels and park conditions, funding is not adequate to meet this goal. As the City adds to its park system without the additional contract funds to maintain them, park conditions will continue to decline in this current operating environment. Below, we describe each component of the estimated maintenance funding gap.

Grounds/Landscape Maintenance Contracts

1) *Restore 2009 Service Levels*

In the 2013 contracts, changes were made to lower the frequency of weed abatement, trimming, and litter pickup at a group of locations from the 2009 contracts. While this was only part of the reason for the reduced contract costs and while it is unclear whether the 2009 contract service levels were even optimal at that time, PRM staff expressed the need to restore service frequencies to at least the 2009 contract levels because of the adverse effects the service frequency reductions in 2013 have had on overall park landscape conditions. Therefore, to calculate an overall minimum funding gap for maintenance, we included the difference between the aggregate amounts of the 2009 and 2013 contracts.

As shown in Table 3 below, in the 2009 contracts, the City authorized a total of \$3,221,760 annually. **In 2013, although the total number of acres to be maintained declined by 0.2% from the number in the 2009 contracts, the contract amounts were reduced by \$336,187, or 10%, to \$2,885,573. Furthermore, the contracted staffing levels assigned in the current contracts were 23% less than the 2009 contract staffing levels, losing 16 FTEs.**

**Table 3.
Comparison of 2009 and 2013
Grounds/Landscape Maintenance Contracts**

Contract	Acres Maintained	Annual Funding*	Contractor Staffing Assigned (FTEs)
2009 Contract	1,661	\$3,221,760	70
2013 Contract	1,658	\$2,885,573	54
Difference	-3	-\$336,187	-16
% Change	-0.2%	-10%	-23%

**The total funding amounts also include a 15% contingency for supplemental costs, but exclude one-time costs and service options that were not realized.*

2) *New Maintenance Locations*

Since the execution of the contracts in 2013, the City has added new parks and medians as well as made enhancements to existing parks, medians, and City facilities that have increased the amount of maintenance needed. During the reporting process of our audit, PRM requested City Council on April 5, 2016 to authorize additional funds to the contracts for the maintenance of these new locations. In addition, a 10% contingency was requested for expected service changes for future parks and facilities. However, until this recent request, **neither additional funding authority nor amendments had been made to the contract to address the increase in service locations since October 2013.**

PRM estimates that the maintenance of the additional 11 medians, 7 facilities, and 16 parks and park improvements that are not part of the current contracts requires another \$358,674 per year. This amount equates to 14,400 man-hours or 7 FTEs, based on our hourly rate estimate. A few examples of the modifications include:

- \$155,655 per year for the higher level of service needed after the development of Chittick Field.
- \$32,508 per year for the Bixby Expansion and Bixby Annex related to added tasks for trash pickup, weed removal, and mowing.
- An additional \$11,880 per year for enhancements to Jenny Rivera Park for turf maintenance and trash pickup.
- \$14,400 more per year needed for 2nd Street medians that were previously not included in the contract.

3) *Unaccounted-For Maintenance Locations*

We identified another twenty (20) park locations, beyond the known additions and improvements described above, that are not included in the current grounds and landscape maintenance contracts. Although these areas are likely being maintained by the contractors, PRM could not provide information concerning maintenance frequency, scope of work, and/or costs associated with the maintenance of these locations. We estimated that the maintenance cost for these unaccounted-for locations would be \$167,186 per year, equating to 6,700 man-hours or 3 FTEs.

4) Tree Maintenance Contract

Park trees have social, economic and environmental value that is intrinsic to a community's quality of life. The tree inventory study completed in 2015 of nearly 90% of the City's park trees estimated their overall monetary value at over \$112 million. Maintaining these essential, valuable assets is crucial.

Regular tree trimming can improve the overall health of trees, increase safety, and improve the park aesthetics. Studies have shown that it is best practice for trees to be on a trimming cycle of every four or five years, as delaying tree pruning would likely lead to higher costs in the future.²

However, the City's current park tree trimming is not on a trimming cycle and instead is performed on an as-needed and emergency basis. It is focused primarily on trees in high usage areas, such as play areas and picnic tables.

To estimate the cost of moving towards a five-year trimming cycle, we used a total citywide inventory of 29,500 park trees. This estimate is based on two separate counts. First, the recent inventory study counted 26,000 park trees within the City, with the exception of park trees in the Tidelands area, which encompasses land and water areas along the Pacific Ocean coast. Secondly, the recently executed tree trimming contract indicated a total of 3,500 park trees in the Tidelands area.

As a result, to implement a five-year tree trimming cycle for the 29,500 park trees in the entire City, we estimate it would cost at least \$434,588 per year, as shown in Table 4 below.

**Table 4.
Estimated Annual
Tree Trimming Funding Gap
Based on a 5-Year Trimming Cycle**

Service	FY15 Actual Expenses (As-Needed Basis)	Est. Cost (5-Year Cycle Basis)	Amount Needed
Tree Trimming	\$282,396	\$433,588	\$151,192

In FY 2015, the City spent about 65% of the amount that would be required annually to meet this best practice tree trimming cycle. If the City were to continue spending the same amount as it did in FY 2015 for park tree trimming and attempt to adopt a five-year trimming cycle, the tree maintenance funding shortfall would be at least \$151,192 per year.

² Vogt, Jess; Richard J. Hauer and Burnell C. Fischer. 2015. "The Cost of Maintaining and Not Maintaining the Urban Forest: A Review of the Urban Forestry and Arboriculture Literature." *Arboriculture & Urban Forestry Journal* 41(6): 293-323.

IRRIGATION SYSTEM UPGRADES AND OTHER NEEDS

A major portion of the City's park system is plagued by an antiquated irrigation system that impacts maintenance needs and costs, and requires over \$113 million to upgrade.

- In December 2015, the City Manager's Office presented a Study Session to City Council on the City's infrastructure needs and estimated that citywide irrigation system upgrades would cost over \$113 million.
- The City spent an estimated \$262,000 in FY 2015 on unscheduled repairs and maintenance to the deteriorating irrigation system. The problems associated with this irrigation system include constant repairs, broken lines, inconsistent water pressure, flooding, manual controls, and uneven water distribution, which results in wet/dry spots and browning of turf in some areas.

Deferring needed maintenance and repair to parks, trees and infrastructure will degrade the value and quality of life that these assets afford to residents, and can pose significant liability to the City.

In the same December 2015 Study Session presented to Council on City infrastructure needs, the City Manager's Office estimated a budgetary shortfall of \$20 million annually for ongoing maintenance of park grounds and park facilities. The figure likely includes not only grounds and landscape maintenance, but also the maintenance of playgrounds, walkways and other paved surfaces, fountains, community centers, fencing, benches, and picnic tables, as well other park related features. While the City Manager's presentation did not provide details that comprise the estimate, the City acknowledged that more maintenance is needed and additional funding is necessary to improve the conditions of the City parks.

Recommendations:

We recognize that essentially more money is needed to fix this problem, and that resources are scarce. Thus, we recommend that the City explore other approaches to raising additional funds beyond General Fund dollars for grounds/landscape and tree maintenance. These approaches could include:

- 1.1. Reassess all park and recreation related fees to determine whether a higher level of cost recovery can be attained to include the cost of park landscape and tree maintenance.**
 - a. Revisit all adult sports and youth club team fees. The fees for permits to use athletic fields and park facilities could include the cost for ongoing park maintenance.

- b. Revise the Park and Recreation Facilities Fee to include a provision for ongoing maintenance of parklands. Municipal Code Chapter 18.18 imposes a park impact fee on new residential development to fund parkland acquisition and recreation improvements, but restricts the funds from being used for maintenance.

1.2 Consider selling the naming rights for parks, park facilities and other park features. These would include parks, community centers, dog parks, fields, gardens, trees, fountains, and other park features. We believe this presents an opportunity to engage the community and private sector in investing in our local community. Other communities, such as the County of San Diego, have successfully implemented naming rights programs. More information on San Diego's Naming Rights Opportunities Program can be found in Appendix A.

1.3 Develop a funding or financing plan that explores alternative funding sources, such as grants, donor programs and private-public partnerships.

Finding #2.

The City has focused on the expansion of parks, open space, and recreational opportunities, but has not adequately considered how these areas are to be maintained.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

The City continues to expand park lands without a clear funding strategy to maintain them adequately.

The City's strategic documents – such as the General Plan's Open Space and Recreation Element and PRM's Strategic Plan – focus on recreational and open space expansion, with little to no discussion on the long-term costs of maintaining parks and trees, as well as other challenges that the City faces today.

- Adopted in 2002, the General Plan's Open Space and Recreation Element established a recreation open space standard of eight (8) acres per 1,000 Long Beach residents. The City has strived to add parks and open space to meet this target and, based on the City's current population, an additional 660 acres are needed to reach the standard. However, we question whether this goal is attainable, given the current water restrictions and the City's financial constraints.
- Developed in 2003, PRM's Strategic Plan identified increasing the amount of park space and the number of community facilities as its most prominent strategic goals, but did not address the need to provide adequate landscape maintenance as these new park spaces are added.
- In 2008, with the help of an outside consultant, the City started the development of an Urban Forest Master Plan for its tree population but never completed and adopted it. This study effort established urban forest goals, priorities and policies that would have served as the foundation for the Master Plan. The study provided seven primary goals, one of which was to "identify appropriate funding levels, and provide stable, long-term funding sources for urban forest activities and programs." It recommended that one of the policies to achieve this goal is to "provide adequate funding for tree trimming, maintenance, removal and replacement."

Otherwise, there is hardly any mention of park trees in the City's strategic documents, as both the Open Space and Recreation Element and the PRM Strategic Plan did not appear to recognize the significance of the trees to parks and other open spaces. A well-developed and well-thought-out master plan can provide the City with a blueprint for effective urban forest management moving forward.

The more trees and park acreage the City adds, the more it will cost to properly maintain them. Furthermore, the State water mandates restrict the City's current water usage. With a finite water supply, as the City adds more and more park land and trees, each park and each tree will get less and less

water. Even if maintenance levels are enhanced and increased, without adequate water, the condition of the City's trees and parks could further decline.

PERFORMANCE METRICS

The City lacks clear performance metrics on park and tree conditions that can be communicated and understood by City employees, contractors, elected officials, and the general public.

When asked to describe the current conditions of the parks and their trees in relative detail, and the targeted conditions toward which the City strives, stakeholders were not be able to do so in any systematic way. Answers were short and vague, such as "We're not where we want to be," "They should be clean and green," or "We should do better." These statements fall short of providing any meaningful understanding of current conditions and the City's goals with respect to the health and condition of parks and trees.

The City lacks performance measures on park and tree conditions that can be understood by all stakeholders, including City staff, contractors, elected officials and the general public. This lack of clear performance metrics and goals makes it difficult to determine a direction, monitor performance, implement effective planning and determine resource needs.

The Municipal Code and the landscape maintenance contracts contain standards for landscape maintenance. But the horticulture jargon contained in these standards are often difficult to understand. The maintenance contracts include specifications that are generally technical in nature, describing heights and diameters of cuts and growth, as well as pruning and other maintenance techniques. In other areas of the contract, the specifications state that the maintenance activities must be performed according to the American Horticultural Standards, but without describing the specific applicable standards. Some examples of the technical specifications include:

- Turf shall be mowed within 6-12 inches of all appurtenances.
- A minimum of 12" to a maximum 24" or more if root flares are present will have bare soil buffer zone shall be maintained chemically around the circumstance at the base of all trees.
- Shrubs and mounding shall not exceed two feet (2') in height within areas required for vehicular sight distance depending on roadway topography.
- Ground cover height should not exceed 6" with a beveled edge.

While it is important that City staff and contractors are knowledgeable about the contract specifications, we were told that the specifications are rarely referenced on a day-to-day basis to determine how services are to be performed and to assess the performance of these maintenance activities. The specifications are likely good guidelines for best practices, but they are

not practical for everyday usage. The existing specifications cannot communicate the current conditions of the City's parks and trees, and do not allow the City to set maintenance performance goals toward which to strive or to effectively manage stakeholder expectations.

Instead, the City should simplify and develop broad performance measures that can provide not only PRM and the maintenance contractors but also elected officials and the general public with one common set of indicators of park and tree conditions. The maintenance of these parks and trees, as well the monitoring of them, can then all be performed through the lens of these performance metrics. New York City and San Francisco have been successfully using park inspection rating systems that hold city departments and contractors accountable to a specific set of standards focused on cleanliness, safety, and structural conditions. More information on San Francisco's Park Evaluation Program can be found in Appendix B of this report.

Data collected through these regular inspections would be used as a management tool to identify performance trends in specific parks and to distribute resources based on needs. Furthermore, inspection ratings and data should be made available to the general public so that service expectations are equally shared and understood. A common rating system can be based on an A-F letter grade, a number or percentage rating, acceptable or unacceptable rating, or a combination of these.

Recommendations:

2.1 Modify and update existing strategic plan documents for park landscape and park trees to specifically address maintenance requirements, expected funding standards, and criteria for park expansion maintenance.

- a. Gather stakeholder input and regularly communicate these plans to policymakers and the general public.
- b. Ensure ample discussion at staff and City Council levels during the planning of any new park acquisition or renovation projects regarding the ongoing maintenance needs and costs associated with these projects.

2.2 Adopt tree and landscape maintenance performance measures, and develop a park inspection rating program that would allow the City to track how it is meeting established metrics and expectations for park and tree conditions.

- a. Performance measures and expectations for park conditions ought to be realistic and reflective of available funding.

- b. Provide each park a rating for overall condition, safety and cleanliness, which would be comprised of established ratable park features.
- c. Communicate the results of the inspection program on a regular basis to City Council and to the general public.

2.3 Develop and adopt a park tree maintenance plan that is based on a five-year tree trimming frequency schedule. The plan should consider strategies for other maintenance activities that are also critical for the health and longevity of the tree population:

- Watering
- Tree removal
- Mulching
- Pest and disease management
- Soil and nutrient management

Finding #3.

After the City purchased over \$215,000 worth of relatively new vehicles and landscape maintenance equipment from a prior landscape maintenance vendor, the equipment was left unused in the City yard for several years and allowed it to depreciate in value.

The City mismanaged expensive vehicles and equipment, leaving them unused in the City yard for more than two years.

In June 2013, the City contracted with Marina Landscape, Inc. (Marina) to begin park landscape maintenance services. However, in August 2013, the City and Marina mutually agreed that it was no longer viable for the company to continue the contract. As part of the Dissolution Agreement, the City purchased \$215,622 in equipment from Marina, as itemized in Table 5.

**Table 5.
Marina Landscape Settlement
Equipment Purchased**

Equipment	Quantity	Purchase Price
Mowers	10	\$106,015.77
Trucks	3	\$86,869.50
Trailers	3	\$20,058.78
Edgers	4	\$2,678.00
Total		\$215,622.05

According to PRM staff, the equipment pieces were newly purchased by Marina at the time they entered into the contract (June 2013) and were less than six months old when acquired by the City, with the trucks having less than 2,000 miles on each when sold to the City. The Dissolution Agreement called for Marina to deliver to the City the equipment and all parts in good working order, and with all applicable warranties and title documents on or before September 3, 2013. However, the City made payment to Marina for the items prior to obtaining all the necessary documentation. Title documents were not obtained for the trucks and trailers, which the City indicated are necessary to be able to sell them or put them into service.

Nearly 3 years later, the City Auditor’s inquiry into this matter triggered action by the City to secure the necessary title documents for either City use or resale and to determine if there was use for the equipment within a City department. During the reporting process for the audit, PRM stated that the trucks are now in use by the Water Department, and PRM will assess whether to use the mowers and edgers. However, given the long time lapse from the time the vehicles and equipment were purchased, the City wasted resources because it failed to repurpose or sell newly-purchased equipment or auction them in a timely fashion.

Recommendation:

- 3.1 The City should have appropriate processes in place covering acquisition of equipment to ensure the equipment is assigned timely for City use or auctioned off to third parties.**

Finding #4.

The scope of work defined in the City's landscape maintenance contracts had not been representative of the actual work being performed, making it difficult for the City to effectively monitor the contractors' work.

The scope of work in the landscape maintenance contracts are obsolete, making it difficult to enforce contract obligations.

The landscape maintenance contracts that were executed in 2013 had not been reflective of the actual work being performed by the contractors for several reasons:

- The contractors were maintaining new parks, park improvements, medians and city facilities that were added after the current contracts were executed in October 2013, but no amendments or side agreements had been executed to reflect this work until recently. In April 2016, as discussed earlier, PRM requested City Council to authorize additional funds to service these new locations. However, we noted earlier that the funding gap to provide adequate grounds and landscape maintenance is estimated to be substantially larger than the amount PRM recently requested.
- Contractors are requested to perform maintenance activities that are beyond the scope of the contract for as-needed clean-up services for special events for no additional cost.

As a result of these factors, **contractors have been expected to maintain more service area and perform more activities but with less money and fewer assigned personnel. The contractors and resources have been spread thinner throughout the City, and we have seen evidence that the level of service has suffered.** PRM staff and the contractors indicated that a "give-and-take" approach has been used, allowing the contractors to bypass some certain tasks and frequencies, so that a larger area can be serviced.

When the contract no longer reflects the work being performed, it is very difficult to monitor the quality of the service provided or enforce contract requirements. Neither the City nor the contractor have clarity regarding the expected services, thereby making it very difficult to know if the contractor has met contractual obligations.

- Without being able to enforce contract requirements, contractors have not received deductions for poor performance.
- PRM staff indicated that contractors were not performing certain tasks during our audit period, such as dethatching, aeration, mulching, and irrigation audits. According to PRM management, because of the generally poor condition of the park turf, dethatching is not necessary. Furthermore, PRM management indicated it is now scheduling the contractors to perform other important tasks, such as aeration and irrigation audits.

- PRM lacks a system to verify contractors are performing contract services and specifications. Positive confirmation when maintenance tasks are performed is not documented. The only documentation that exists points to problems observed. PRM management indicated that they are working on using an existing work order management system to track landscape maintenance performance.
- There was a lack of consistency in the approaches of the PRM Gardeners who are responsible for monitoring the contractors' work. We noted that one Gardener's expectations with regard to services and expected conditions may be different than those of another Gardener monitoring another service area. According to PRM management, they have been working to standardize the evaluation criteria used by the PRM Gardeners to assess the contractors' work.

Recommendations:

- 4.1 Amend the contract scope of work to reflect realistic service levels and frequencies consistent with desired park conditions and available funding.**
- 4.2 Amend the contract to accurately reflect all service locations.**
- 4.3 Analyze work order and inspection data regularly to react to and rectify problems as quickly as possible, as well as to identify maintenance trends and needs for resource planning.**
- 4.4 Continue to improve contract monitoring and park maintenance, including:**
 - a. Standardizing contract monitoring training on evaluation standards and maintenance priorities.
 - b. Streamlining and standardizing the day-to-day communication between PRM staff and the contractors.
 - c. Exploring and adopting the use of new technologies, such as a work order management system and handheld devices to better document park conditions and collect data, as well as to improve the tracking of the maintenance work performed by the contractors and any work performed by City staff.
 - d. Increasing the role of the PRM Gardeners to perform some maintenance work.
- 4.5 Have City Council or any other department sponsoring events at parks and park facilities pay for the maintenance prepping and clean-up.**

Finding #5.

Lax oversight of invoice documentation resulted in the City paying nearly \$81,000 over 16 months for maintenance service that was never performed.

OPTIONAL SERVICE LOCATIONS

\$80,800 for optional service locations were mistakenly included with regular service charges. The error was not detected for 16 months.

Within a 16-month span, the City paid \$80,800 for service locations at which maintenance was never performed. The landscape maintenance contract with Azteca Landscape includes an option to service two possible locations (called "Bid Options" in the contract agreement): the LA Rio Trail and Sunnyside Cemetery, which would cost an additional \$5,050 per month or \$60,600 per year if the option were to be exercised. The City had anticipated possibly taking ownership of these two sites and having maintenance performed at some point during the contract period.

However, the City never assumed responsibility of these locations, but the maintenance costs for these two locations were mistakenly included in the monthly invoices, combined with regular service charges. The City did not verify the amount being charged against the contract pricing. In total, \$80,800 over a period of 16 months was paid for maintenance that was never performed.

At the time of this report, **PRM is now expending time and resources to correct this situation by working with the City Attorney and the Department of Financial Management to recoup these funds.**

BACK-UP DOCUMENTATION

Payments related to nearly \$300,000 for supplemental work lacked sufficient back-up documentation needed to substantiate actual costs of materials and hours worked.

The landscape agreements include an option to add expenditures up to 15% above the annual contract amount for supplemental work. The components of the supplemental costs, most of which are related to irrigation repairs, are labor hours to perform the repair and material costs for items that were purchased by the contractor. In FY 2015, the City expended \$59,238 on materials and \$235,193 on labor costs for this additional work.

Based on our review of the supplemental invoices paid during our audit period, we observed that payment of supplemental work occurred without back-up documentation for labor hours and for part purchases. There were no receipts or other documentation to verify the costs of material purchases were reasonable. There was also no detail of when supplemental work occurred to verify labor hours.

In addition, the type of information provided on the invoices was inconsistent. Some invoices included description of parts and costs but excluded receipts, while other invoices did not delineate the materials used and only had a lump sum total. Allowing contractors to submit invoices without proper or consistent back-up documentation increases the risk of falsified invoices and payment errors.

CRITERIA FOR SUPPLEMENTAL IRRIGATION WORK

Confusing contract language makes it difficult to determine which irrigation activities are to be considered as part of the general scope of work or be paid out of supplemental funds.

PRM staff and contractors are unclear on the types of service that could be paid from the contracts' supplemental funds. **Language in the contract that discusses supplemental work is scattered throughout the document, and is unclear and contradictory. This makes it difficult to determine how much of the over \$294,431 paid for supplemental work is appropriate.**

Contract Section 4.9 and Section 4.10 provide overarching guidance on the activities that could be paid as additional or supplemental work. These sections state that the City may authorize the contractors to perform additional work, including but not limited to repairs and replacements "when the need for such work arises out of extraordinary incidents such as vandalism, Acts of God, and third party negligence." However, throughout the contract agreement, the City provides more specific definitions of supplemental or additional work activities, some of which could be requested at the City's discretion based on desire or need, rather than on extraordinary circumstances.

The primary confusion with supplemental work arises when the additional task performed involves repairs and/or replacement to the irrigation system. This issue is important to address because 90% of supplemental work expenditures were related to irrigation repairs and replacements.

- Different sections within the contract that attempt to define which irrigation activities should be considered as additional work are conflicting. Section 10.1 and Section 10.2 state that adjustments, repairs, modifications, improvements, and other work to the irrigation system are included in the general maintenance scope of work. This means that such activities would be covered by regular monthly payments.

Section 4.9 states that repairs and replacements of the irrigation system, when the need arises out of an extraordinary incident, or improvements in order to add, modify, or refurbish irrigation systems would be considered as additional, supplemental work. Furthermore, Section 10.18 states that while sprinkler heads at the Civic Center are to be maintained and adjusted regularly, repairs are considered extra work.

The language in these contract sections are contradictory and, thus, do not provide clarity on which activity should be considered as additional work and paid with the contracts' supplemental funds.

Given this lack of clarity and consistency in the contract, it is not surprising that PRM staff and contractors provided various interpretations on the types of activity that is considered as supplemental work, including after-hours work

performed using overtime; size of the irrigation lines needing repair; any changes to the current irrigation system; and work resulting from vandalism. Most of these “qualifying” additional work activities described by PRM staff and contractors are not mentioned in the contracts. Other PRM staff interviewed during this audit simply indicated that they were not sure what constituted supplemental work.

As a result, there is the risk that some service activities paid through supplemental monies should have been covered under the contracted general maintenance services and, therefore, paid in error. Without clear contract language, PRM is unable to accurately and consistently determine if payments were appropriate.

Recommendations:

- 5.1 Recover the \$80,800 paid in error to the contractor, Azteca Landscape, Inc.**
- 5.2 Ensure there are proper processes in place to implement Bid Options (optional services or service areas) in a new landscape maintenance contract, as well as a review process to ensure that invoice amounts reflect contract amounts.**
- 5.3 Require the contractors to provide appropriate backup documentation for supplemental charges, such as description of labor activity, dates and hours, and receipts for material purchases.**
- 5.4 Review what constitutes supplemental work, and clearly define the criteria for maintenance activities to qualify for supplemental work payment.**
 - a. This can be currently accomplished through an amendment to the contract. Providing clarity to the definition of supplemental work could be accomplished sooner rather than later.

Finding #6.

The City is unable to accurately track over \$138,000 of irrigation parts inventory.

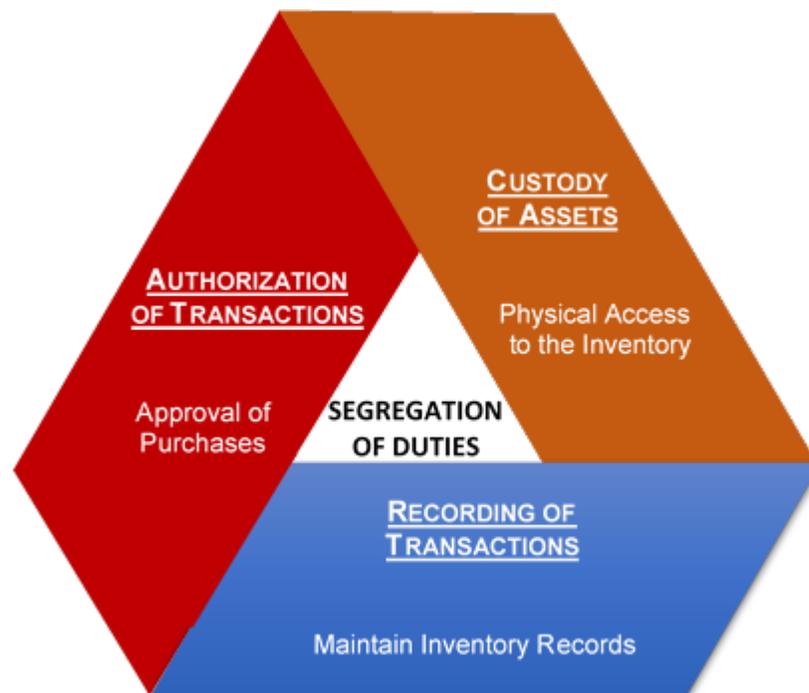
The City lacks effective policies and procedures to manage the irrigation parts inventory.

PRM maintains its own on-hand supply of irrigation parts that can be used by both PRM staff and contractors for irrigation repairs and replacement, which are often required due to the age and condition of the park irrigation system. PRM spent approximately \$138,000 in FY 2015 on irrigation parts, and has stated that annual parts purchases are typically depleted within the year.

LACK OF SEGREGATION OF DUTIES

Segregation of duties in the management of the irrigation parts does not exist. Currently, one staff person has the sole responsibility to order, stock, distribute, and authorize payment for PRM's landscape irrigation parts inventory. Having one person responsible for all aspects of the inventory creates the possibility of theft or misuse occurring undetected. PRM should implement new policies, procedures and controls to ensure that there is segregation among those responsible for duties within these three primary functions, as shown in Figure 2 below: a) Authorization of Transactions; b) Custody of the Assets; and c) Recording of the Transactions.

Figure 2.
Segregation of Duties Triangle



LACK OF INVENTORY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Currently, PRM lacks a management system, manual or automated, that can accurately track and maintain a running inventory of irrigation parts. Because of the lack of an adequate inventory management system, **PRM cannot accurately reconcile between the irrigation parts that go in and out of the stock room, posing a risk for lost inventory.** During our high level reconciliation, we estimated that PRM could not account for at least 10% of items.

Furthermore, without a viable inventory management system, it is difficult for staff to identify trends in asset purchases and usage and, thus, opportunities for efficiency improvements and/or cost savings. For example, per the contract, the landscape maintenance contractors are allowed to charge a 10% markup for any parts purchased for irrigation repairs to cover their overhead cost and profit. Therefore, it costs the City more when contractors purchase parts independently, instead of using the parts supplied out of the City's inventory.

During our review of supplemental invoices, we identified some irrigation parts consistently purchased by the contractors and used for repairs, such as PVC couplings, male adapters, and red bushings. **The City has potentially unrealized cost savings because it does not attempt to identify commonly used parts to stock its inventory.** In addition, the City could avoid paying the 10% markup to the contractors.

Recommendations:

6.1 Develop and implement best practice inventory management policies and procedures, including:

- a. Ensure segregation of duties surrounding the authorization of transactions, custody of assets, and recording of transactions.
- b. Identify and utilize an existing software within the City to serve as an inventory tracking system.
- c. Conduct regular inventory counts and reconcile with existing records.
- d. Identify part items that are consistently used by contractors that can be added to the inventory.

IV. Background

City Parks and Trees

There are a total of 164 parks and specialty use areas totaling 3,100 acres within the City of Long Beach's 50 square miles. The City possesses a diverse park system, consisting of: a 400-acre Regional Park, Community Parks, Mini Parks, Neighborhood Parks, Beach Parks, Greenway Parks, Nature Centers, Biological Reserves, and Special Use Parks, including Dog Parks, Golf Courses, Swimming Facilities, Marinas and Bike Paths.

Trees are an essential component of the City's parks. There are at least 29,500 park trees in the City. The 2015 inventory study of nearly 90% of these park trees estimated their overall monetary value at over \$112 million. The majority of park trees consists of the following species: Canary Island Pine, California Sycamore, Shamel Ash, Chinese Elm, Glossy Privet, Coast Live Oak, Chinese Flame, Mexican Fan Palm, Jacaranda, and Blue Gum.

Landscape Maintenance Contracts

Under the oversight of the PRM Department, the City contracts with two different vendors – Azteca Landscape, Inc. and Merchants Landscape Services, Inc. – for the majority of the landscape maintenance services of the City's parks, street medians, and facilities. The serviced locations encompass a large majority of the park locations within the City, while the maintenance of other locations are covered under specialty maintenance contracts or leases. In addition to the park areas, grounds maintenance is also provided for various City facilities, such as the libraries, health and police department satellite locations, as well as street medians.

In general, the contractors provide grounds and landscape maintenance services inclusive of, but not limited to,

- Trimming
- Mowing and Edging
- Pruning
- Turf Renovation
- Fertilization
- Aeration
- Irrigation Maintenance
- Weed Control
- Litter Control/Trash Removal
- Pest Control
- Lake Maintenance
- Drainage Cleanup

The City parks included in the contracts are divided into four contract areas. The four contract areas include a total of 325 total locations, consisting of park and specialty use areas, street medians, and City facilities, which cover about 1,660 acres. Currently, Azteca Landscape is contracted to perform work in Contract Areas 1, 2, and 3 and Merchants Landscape Services is contracted to perform work in Contract Area 4. The current contract agreements were made effective on October 1, 2013 and expired on May 31,

2015. The City exercised the first of two one-year contract renewal options, expiring May 31, 2016. At the time of this report, it is likely that the City will exercise the remaining renewal option, extending the contract to May 31, 2017.

The contract scope of work is based on frequencies (how often a task is to be performed) and to what specification it is to be performed for various tasks and locations. Some of the key tasks and frequencies include:

- Weekly mowing and edging,
- Quarterly shrub pruning,
- Monthly spraying for weeds,
- Daily general clean-up of litter and debris, and
- Aeration of sports fields two times per year.

The contracts call for monthly payments for the recurring agreed-upon work for the specified locations. In addition, supplemental funds of 15% of the base contract amount can be used for additional work as needed. Most of the supplemental funds are currently allocated to repairs for the aging irrigation system throughout the parks and medians.

The current contracts executed in October 2013 authorized up to \$2,955,264 per year in expenditures for grounds and landscape maintenance to the two contractors, as shown in Table 6 below.

**Table 6.
Not to Exceed Annual Authorizations
Landscape Maintenance Contracts (October 2013)**

Contract Authorized Amounts	Contractor		Total
	Azteca	Merchant	
Core Services	\$1,869,120	\$640,075	\$2,509,195
15% Supplemental Services	\$280,368	\$96,011	\$376,379
SUBTOTAL	\$2,149,488	\$736,086	\$2,885,574
Optional Service Locations	\$60,600	-	\$60,600
15% Supplemental on Optional Service Locations	\$9,090	-	\$9,090
SUBTOTAL	\$69,690	\$0	\$69,690
TOTAL	\$2,219,178	\$736,086	\$2,955,264

Tree Trimming Contract

The City contracts with a separate contractor for the trimming of park trees. In September 2015, PRM entered into a contract with Great Scott Tree Service, Inc. for as-needed tree trimming services and to respond to emergency tree trimming needs in park, beach, and marina areas. The contract is for an

annual amount not to exceed \$483,000 (including a 15% contingency) for a period of two years.

PRM Oversight

The oversight of the landscape maintenance contracts is split between PRM's Maintenance Operations Bureau and Marine & Beach Maintenance Bureau. The majority of the locations are in the Uplands area of the City and are overseen by the Maintenance Operations Bureau. The Marine & Beach Maintenance has a lesser role since they are monitoring the contract for a smaller number of locations in the Tidelands area.

Between both bureaus, PRM has the following personnel related to oversight of these contracts:

- 5 Gardeners II who perform monitoring duties. There is one for each contract area as well as one for Tidelands locations.
- 3 Park Maintenance Supervisors to cover four contract areas and the Tidelands area.
- 2 Superintendents to oversee the Uplands and Tidelands portions of the contract.
- 2 Bureau Managers of the Maintenance Operations Bureau, one responsible for Facilities and Grounds maintenance operations and the other for Marine and Beach maintenance operations.

The main oversight activity performed is to monitor the contractors' compliance with the contract specifications. In order to do this, the Gardeners are each assigned a section of the City and visit each assigned park at least once per week. During their site visits, the Gardeners are tasked with evaluating the contractor's work in their contract area against specifications and frequencies outlined in the contracts. They document deficiencies with the work of the contractors and hold meetings with them, along with PRM Supervisors and Superintendents, to discuss the issues identified and the action plans to resolve them.

V. Objective, Scope, and Methodology

The objective of this audit was to assess the Parks, Recreation, and Marine Department's approach and strategy for landscape maintenance contract oversight in ensuring cost effectiveness and adequate park and tree conditions. The audit scope covered activities during FY 2013 through FY 2015. To achieve this objective we:

- Reviewed current landscape maintenance contracts and amendments with Azteca and Merchant;
- Interviewed PRM staff, including those performing monitoring and supervising duties;
- Reconciled PRM park inventory reports against contract park locations;
- Analyzed Weekly Agendas with contractors for issues identified while monitoring;
- Interviewed representatives from Azteca and Merchant;
- Conducted site visits and observations of a sample of 39 parks citywide;
- Analyzed controls surrounding irrigation inventory responsibilities, purchases, and record keeping;
- Reviewed contract payments for monthly and supplemental work, as well as payments made for tree trimming; and
- Surveyed user groups and spoke to members of the Parks and Recreation Commission's Maintenance Committee.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS). Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

VI. Appendices

Appendix A. County of San Diego, Parks and Recreation Naming Rights Opportunities Program

Following this page are documents that provide additional information on San Diego County's naming rights program:

- 1) County Board of Supervisors Policy Number F-52: Naming of County Park and Recreation Amenities.
 - 2) Excerpts from the Naming Rights Opportunities Booklet, a promotional material that explains the program's goals and lists the park amenities eligible for naming and their costs.
-

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS POLICY**

Subject

Naming of County Park and Recreation Amenities

**Policy
Number**

F-52

Page

1 of 3

Purpose

The intent of this policy is to set forth criteria and parameters to guide naming rights opportunities for amenities within County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) facilities. This policy provides DPR the authority to consider and approve the naming of park amenities after an organization, business or individual that has provided a financial contribution to support park and recreation capital or major maintenance projects.

Definitions

In the context of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- a) "Amenity" means a smaller support structure or park feature located within a larger County park facility such as, but not limited to, sports fields, conference rooms, playgrounds, pools, decorative or water play fountains, gardens, gazebos, pavilions, tennis courts, basketball courts, volleyball courts, or trails.
- b) "Naming or Naming Rights" refers to the opportunity to name a DPR park amenity.

Policy

1. DPR shall pursue alternative funding to achieve appropriate levels of cost recovery in accordance with County of San Diego Board of Supervisors Policy B-55 and DPR's cost recovery business plan.
2. The naming of DPR facilities will continue to be covered by Board of Supervisors Policy F-46, which states the naming of County buildings and structures shall be done only by the Board of Supervisors, by resolution adopted with a majority vote.
3. This policy shall supersede F-46 and authorize the DPR Director to consider and approve park amenity naming rights that are for a term of 5 years or less or that will result in \$15,000 or less in total revenue for the duration of the naming term.

Guidelines and Criteria

In all cases, DPR will ensure that naming rights will not be in conflict with or run counter to DPR's mission and goals including, but not limited to:

- Promote healthy lifestyles or civic responsibility
- Recreational programs and services that increased physical, intellectual, social and/or emotional abilities
- Promote environmental awareness and responsibility
- Acquire, preserve, or enhance significant natural or historical/cultural resources

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS POLICY

Subject

Naming of County Park and Recreation Amenities

**Policy
Number**

F-52

Page

2 of 3

- Promote resource sustainability
- Increase environmental stewardship
- Educate public about resources, conservation or sustainability
- Support multiple species conservation program
- Improved energy and water efficiency
- Protect tree population
- Promote acquisition, development or maintenance of facilities that support community needs, provided safe and accessible opportunities to gather, promoted park stewardship or celebrated diversity while connecting communities.
- Supports healthy families, sustainable environments or safe communities
- Foster community ownership in the maintenance and security of the County's trail systems
- Supports accessible places for recreation
- Promote government agency partnerships and community involvement
- Promotes volunteerism
- Enhance park safety
- Strengthen connection between people and the outdoors
- Support providing affordable recreation options
- DPR's mission or objectives that are adopted annually by the Board of Supervisors

Naming rights proposals that shall **not** be considered are those which:

- a. Promote practices that, if they took place, would violate U.S. or state law (i.e. - dumping of hazardous waste, exploitation of child labor, etc.), or promote drugs, alcohol, tobacco, gambling or adult entertainment.
- b. Discriminate on the basis of race/ethnicity, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, medical condition, sexual orientation, marital status, veteran status or age.
- c. Include religious references or political statements.
- d. Endorse products or services that do not comply with DPR policies and procedures, County, State or federal regulations, ordinances, codes, or statutes.
- e. Appear to be in direct competition with DPR services or products.
- f. Endorse products or services that conflict with DPR's mission or Board of Supervisors approved objectives or goals.

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS POLICY**

Subject

Naming of County Park and Recreation Amenities

**Policy
Number**

F-52

Page

3 of 3

All park Amenities eligible for naming rights shall be determined by the DPR Director or designee. If a naming right opportunity includes signage, a detailed proposal of the signage, including design, layout, verbiage and cost will need to be provided, in writing, for review and approval by the DPR Director or designee. DPR can specify sign size, sign, type, and font of any naming rights signage or displays. DPR reserves the right to terminate any naming right agreements not in accordance with this Board Policy.

Sunset Date

This policy will be reviewed for continuance by 12-31-18.

Board Action

01/29/14 (2)

CAO Reference

1. Department of Parks and Recreation

County of San Diego

Parks and Recreation



Support San Diego County Parks with your name!

Parks Make Life Better!

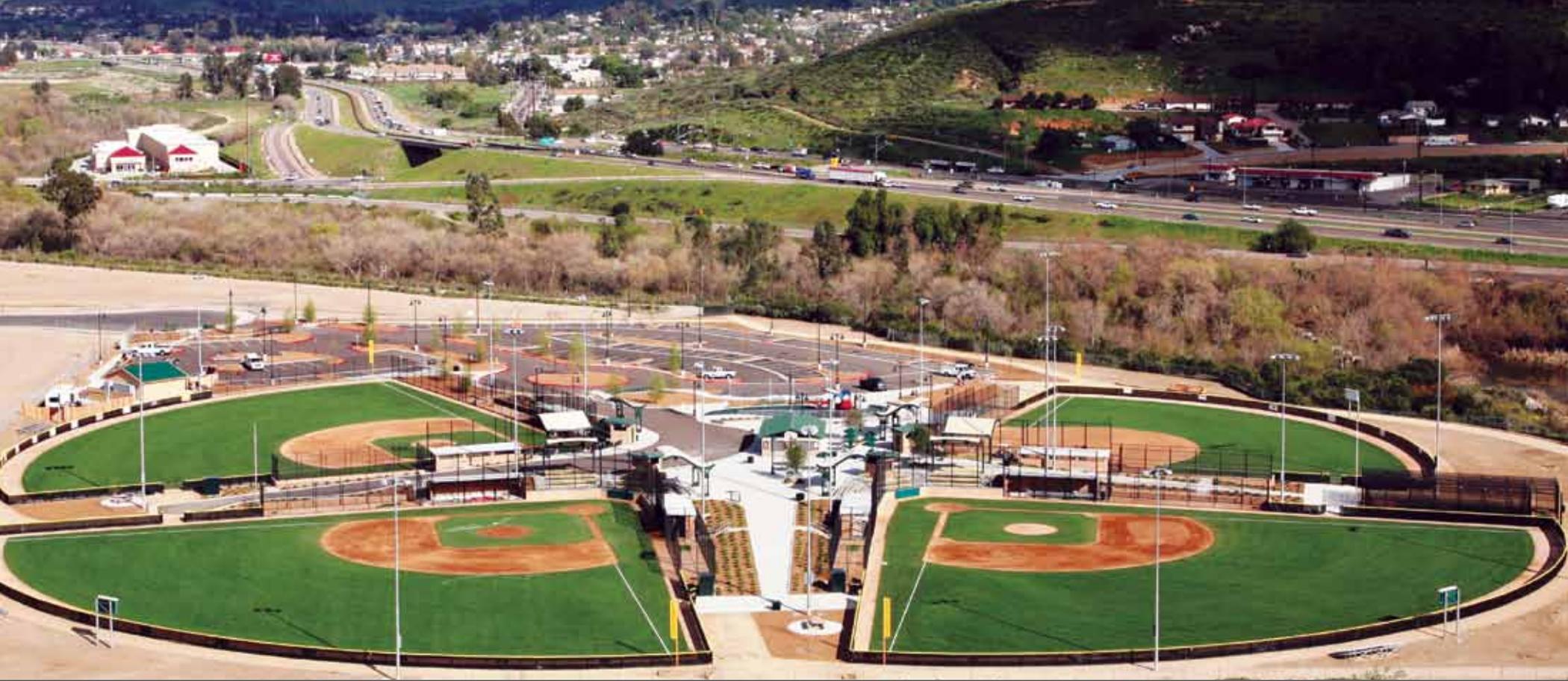
The County of San Diego Parks and Recreation Department seeks to raise \$3,600,000 to extend the excellence that is associated with our parks, open space, trails, facilities, and programs.

Campaign Goal

Our goal is to continue to provide much needed and desired services, programs, and opportunities for County residents at low or no cost. In order to continue to meet public demand for services and facilities, we are seeking like-minded partners to assist DPR in leveraging tax payer dollars.



Why embark? First, to ensure the finest facilities and recreation possible, and to do this at rates that are affordable for local residents. Second, to continue to offer the best quality destination for residents and visitors from across the world.



Lakeside Ballfields

Baseball Fields \$2,000 to \$40,000

By supporting and endorsing one of DPR's many baseball fields, you will be connecting with thousands of visitors that share your love for the sport, while helping your business build brand awareness.

Baseball Field	Ball Field
4S Ranch Sports Park Complex	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Cactus Park Ballfields	1, 2, 3, 4
Lakeside Ballfields	1, 2, 3, 4
Rios Canyon Ballfields	1, 2, 3, 4
Sweetwater Ballfields	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Sweetwater Lane Sports Complex	1, 2, 3, 4
Tijuana River Valley	1, 2, 3, 4, 5



Playgrounds \$2,000 to \$40,000

DPR manages a number of playgrounds throughout the County that are frequented by children and families who love to play and enjoy the outdoors.

Playgrounds

Collier Community Park

Dos Picos County Park

Fallbrook Community Center

Felicita County Park

Flinn Springs County Park

Lindo Lake County Park

Nancy Jane County Park

Otay Lakes County Park

Rios Canyon County Park

San Dieguito County Park

Spring Valley County Park

Staging Areas \$6,000 to \$36,000

Let San Diego County Parks take you on a journey through our vast trail system where large staging areas welcome hikers, bikers, and equestrians to experience the wonders of nature.

Put your name on the gateways to our popular trail system and gain thousands of impressions a year where outdoor enthusiasts can enjoy the spectacular views and catch a glimpse of wildlife.



Staging Areas

El Monte County Park

Otay Valley Regional Park

Ramona Grasslands Preserve

Sweetwater Summit Regional Park

Tijuana River Valley Regional Park



Sports Arenas \$10,000 to \$40,000

DPR maintains and/or operates many sports facilities throughout San Diego County, including soccer arenas, and roller hockey rinks.

Sports Courts \$2,500 to \$40,000

Prominently position your name for sports enthusiasts to see at one of our sports courts. Gain access to a target audience with an advertising solution that is sure to see a return on investment.

Sports Arenas

4S Ranch Sports Park Hockey Arena
Collier County Park Soccer Arena

Basketball Courts

4S Ranch Sports Park
Fallbrook Community Center
Spring Valley Gym

Tennis Courts

4S Ranch Sports Park
Fallbrook Community Center
Lindo Lake County Park



Sweetwater Summit Regional Park

Amphitheaters \$5,000 to \$24,000

Amphitheaters allow a large group of people to gather for special events and presentations. These are great venues where businesses can target their brands to specific demographics.

By placing your brand on one of our amphitheaters, you will be connecting with thousands of visitors who will see your loyalty to parks and help build your business.

Amphitheaters
Live Oak County Park
Sweetwater Summit Regional Park

Skateparks \$15,000 to \$100,000

San Diego County Parks is working to expand skateparks in communities where there is a demand. Skateparks are the place for youth and adults that have a passion for skateboarding.

Naming a skatepark is a great way to guarantee instant recognition of your service or products while supporting the community's youth.



Lakeside Skate Park

Skateparks	Splash Parks
Lakeside Skatepark	Eastview County Park Hilton Head County Park



Hilton Head County Park

Splash Parks \$10,000 to \$40,000

DPR provides community splash parks for a safe, unstructured and low cost, water activity.

With thousands of visitors during the months of May through October, splash parks provide a unique marketing opportunity for those wishing to connect their brand to families with children.



Agua Caliente Regional Park Indoor Therapeutic Spa

Swimming Pools \$5,000 to \$48,000

The Department of Parks and Recreation operates a swimming pool at 4S Ranch Sports Park and a therapeutic spa and two swimming pools at Agua Caliente Regional Park.

Thousands of visitors frequent these aquatic venues each year, providing a unique marketing opportunity for those wishing to spread their brand to aquatic enthusiasts and campers at Agua Caliente.

Swimming Pools and Therapeutic Spas

- 4S Ranch Sports Complex Community Pool
- Agua Caliente Regional Park Children's Pool
- Agua Caliente Regional Park Indoor Therapeutic Spa
- Agua Caliente Regional Park Outdoor Pools

Community Gardens \$2,000 to \$10,000

DPR currently owns and operates three community gardens where residents can have their own space to grow healthy and nutritious food. They also serve as places where community members can share their common love of gardening and discover innovative methods and practices.

Naming a community garden is a great opportunity for any business that wants to market gardening related products or promote sustainable gardening practices.

Community Gardens

Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve

Rancho Guajome Adobe

Tijuana River Valley Regional Park



Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve



Lakeside Community Center



Spring Valley Teen Center



Lakeside Community Center

Community Center Rooms \$3,000 to \$64,000

The Department of Parks and Recreation operates Community Centers in Fallbrook, Lakeside and Spring Valley.

Placing your brand at one of the multi-use rooms provides a marketing opportunity for those businesses wishing to maximize their exposure with the local neighborhoods these community centers serve.

Community Center Rooms

- Fallbrook Community Center (4 Rooms)
- Lakeside Community Center (2 Rooms)
- Lakeside Teen Center Music Room
- Spring Valley Community Center (1 Room)
- Spring Valley Teen Center Music Room

Trails

\$1,000 to \$200,000

Did you know that San Diego has one of the most diverse public trail systems in the nation?

Whether you're interested in a trail on the coast or you're looking for trails that extend through our preserves, we have a multitude of opportunities to get in touch with nature in San Diego County.

Most trails have been designed to accommodate hikers, bikers and equestrians.



San Elijo Lagoon

Trails

Agua Caliente County Park	Luelf Pond Preserve
Barnett Ranch Preserve	Lusardi Creek Preserve
Cactus Park	Mt. Gower Preserve
Del Dios Highlands	Oak Oasis County Park
El Capitan Preserve	Otay Valley Regional Park
El Monte Regional Park	Potrero County Park
Felicita County Park	Ramona Grasslands
Flinn Springs County Park	San Dieguito County Park
Goodan Ranch/Sycamore Canyon Open Space Preserve	San Elijo Lagoon
Guajome Regional County Park	Santa Margarita Preserve
Hellhole Canyon Preserve	Santa Ysabel East
Holly Oaks County Park	Santa Ysabel West
Lake Morena County Park	Simon Preserve
Lakeside Linkage Preserve	Sweetwater Summit Regional Park
Lindo Lake County Park	Tijuana River Valley Regional Park
Live Oak County Park	Volcan Mountain Preserve
Louis Stelzer County Park	Wilderness Gardens Preserve
Los Peñasquitos Canyon	William Heise County Park

Appendix B. San Francisco's Park Evaluation Program

Following this page are documents that provide additional information on San Francisco's Park Evaluation Program:

- 1) Excerpts from the Evaluation Form used by staff to evaluate the City's parks. The excerpts are specific sections within the Evaluation Form that deal with athletic fields and trees.
 - 2) The Executive Summary of the *Park Maintenance Standards: Fiscal Year 2014-15 Annual Report*, which summarizes the results of the annual evaluation along with recommendations for improvement.
-

**SAN FRANCISCO
PARK EVALUATION PROGRAM**

PES15 EVALUATION FORM



Athletic Fields

Evaluate: All natural or synthetic turf areas used for sports (such as baseball diamonds and soccer pitches) and all structures (backstops, dugouts/team benches, goal posts, lighting systems, spectator stands, etc.) pertinent to playing or observing those sports.

Stairways which are not an intrinsic part of an athletic structure should be evaluated under Hardscape except when they are part of an unpaved trail (in which case they should be evaluated under Greenspace).

*If any part of a field is locked, has a sign saying it is "closed", or is marked off with caution tape or cones, do not evaluate it.
Describe the closure here. Continue to evaluate all OPEN areas.*

FULLY CLOSED

FULLY CLOSED

Element	Found Issue	Field #1		Field #2	
		Exact Location of found issue	Description of found issue	Exact Location of found issue	Description of found issue
DRAINAGE	1 pool of standing water 5 feet wide <u>and</u> long	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	2 pools of standing water 3 feet wide <u>and</u> long	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	none of the above Drainage issues found	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	cannot evaluate: irrigation currently running	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
EQUIPMENT	home plate is missing	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	pitching rubber is missing	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	1 soccer net has 1 hole or gap 11" wide <u>and</u> long in any location, including a gap between the net and goal caused by a net being inadequately secured	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	1 soccer net is missing from 1 goal	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	none of the above Equipment issues found	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
FENCING <i>Some fences are shared by multiple fields (or Features). Report each found issue once, in only one place. Include backstops as "fences". DO NOT evaluate locked gates. DO NOT evaluate temporary fencing.</i>	chain link bulges 8-1/2" from vertical at 1 location	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	1 gate does not open fully	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	1 gate latch is not operational	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	1 hole or gap 4-1/2 inches wide or larger in any location, including along bottom of fence, along a pole or at a seam	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	1 horizontal bar is unanchored	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	1 section leans 4-1/2" or more from vertical	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	missing fencing or chain link results in an opening 4-1/2 inches wide or larger	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	1 pole is unstable or leans 8-1/2 inches or more from vertical	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	1 protrusion might catch or harm someone	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	none of the above Fencing issues found	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
this field has no fencing	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		

Athletic Fields

Element	Found Issue	Field #1		Field #2	
		Exact Location of found issue	Description of found issue	Exact Location of found issue	Description of found issue
INFIELD CARE <i>Do not walk on a wet infield – you'll damage the surface & risk injury.</i>	base running path is less than 3 feet wide in any location	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	home plate has a 2 inch deep depression on either side	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	pitching rubber has a 2 inch deep depression on either side	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	none of the above Infield Care issues found	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
LITTER & DEBRIS <i>When counting litter/debris, all pieces must be within 10 feet of a spot where you stand. Pieces outside that zone cannot be included.</i>	1 hypodermic needle , condom, dead animal, feces, feces-filled bag, or broken glass	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	1 large object which would impede play is present (abandoned furniture, luggage, tent, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	5 "larger" pieces of litter/debris lie within ten feet of you in any direction (food wrappings, paper, plastic, pieces of clothing, limbs, rocks, etc., which are 1 inch long or longer) <i>DO NOT evaluate leaves.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	10 "small" pieces of litter lie within ten feet of you in any direction (litter less than 1 inch long, like cigarette butts)	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	none of the above Litter & Debris issues found	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
MOWING	any field turf is more than 4-1/2 inches high at any location, inside or outside of the play area	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	all areas are mowed to 4-1/2 inches or below	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
PAINT	1 amenity has multiple colors of paint are on	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	1 amenity is partially painted ; partially unpainted	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	1 amenity has 1 strip of peeling , chipped or missing paint that is 4-1/2" long and 1" wide	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	none of the above Paint issues found	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	this field has no amenities	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
PRUNING & EDGING	1 amenity (bench, building, fence, pole, sign, etc.) has turf around it that is 4-1/2 inches higher than the height of the rest of the field <i>DO NOT evaluate turf height under bushes or around trees.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	1 curb, pavement or path has field turf growing 4-1/2" or more onto it for a distance of five feet <i>Evaluate edging at roadside curbs and along all other Hardscape.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	none of above Pruning & Edging issues found	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	

Athletic Fields

Element	Found Issue	Field #1		Field #2	
		Exact Location of found issue	Description of found issue	Exact Location of found issue	Description of found issue
SEATING	1 seat leg is missing, broken or unanchored	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	1 seat slat is missing, broken or unanchored	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	1 sharp edge , protrusion, rot or splintering	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	1 bench or chair is unstable or insufficiently sturdy	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	other damage to a bench or chair impedes observing the intended sport	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	none of the above Seating issues found	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	this field has no seating	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
SIGNAGE <i>Evaluate only sports signage here.</i> <i>DO NOT evaluate temporary signs.</i>	1 sign is located where it cannot be seen by users who need its information <i>Report a sign obscured by vegetation as a Pruning issue under Greenspace, Ornamental Beds or Trees (depending upon what vegetation needs pruning).</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	1 sign has text that is illegible	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	1 sign is installed upside down	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	1 sign pole is unstable or leaning more than 11" from vertical	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	1 sign is unanchored	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	none of the above Signage issues found	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	this field has no sports signage	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
STAIRWAYS & RAMPS	1 handrail is unusable, unanchored or unstable <i>Report a handrail obscured by vegetation as a Pruning issue under Greenspace, Ornamental Beds or Trees.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	1 step is broken or unstable	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	none of the above Signage issues found	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	this field has no sports stairways or ramps	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	

Athletic Fields

Element	Found Issue	Field #1		Field #2	
		Exact Location of found issue	Description of found issue	Exact Location of found issue	Description of found issue
STRUCTURES <i>Evaluate backstop/fencing under Fencing; bench/bleachers under Seating.</i>	1 sharp edge , protrusion, rot or splintering	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	1 soccer goal frame is cracked or broken	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	1 soccer goal (or more) is unlocked	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	1 structure is unstable or insufficiently sturdy	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	1 wheel is missing from a portable soccer goal	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	other structure damage (to a goal post, lighting system, etc.) impedes playing the intended sport	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	none of the above Structures issues found	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	this field has no structures	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	How many 24-foot soccer goals are present?				
	How many 18-foot soccer goals are present?				
How many 12-foot soccer goals are present?					
SURFACE QUALITY	1 hole 2" deep <u>and</u> 4-1/2" across, or larger (include holes around low irrigation heads here)	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	1 mound created by a gopher or other animal rises 2 inches above the surrounding turf	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	1 tire rut 4-1/2" deep <u>and</u> 5 feet long, or larger	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	some other field surface issue impedes play	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	none of the above Surface Quality issues found	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
TURF CONDITION <i>A "bare spot" is a turf area with exposed soil and virtually no grass.</i>	1 bare spot 5 feet wide <u>and</u> long, or larger	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	3 bare spots 3 feet wide <u>and</u> long, or larger	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	5 bare spots 2 feet wide <u>and</u> long, or larger	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	1 area where all turf within 10 feet of where you stand is entirely brown	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	2 edges of synthetic turf are frayed or unanchored	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	1 hole or tear in synthetic turf	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	none of the above Turf Condition issues found	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
VANDALISM	chalk graffiti (in any amount)	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	etching or carving (in any amount)	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	1 ink graffiti	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	1 paint graffiti	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	1 sticker	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	none of the above Vandalism issues found	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	

Athletic Fields

Element	Found Issue	Field #1		Field #2	
		Exact Location of found issue	Description of found issue	Exact Location of found issue	Description of found issue
WEEDS <i>DO NOT evaluate natural turf.</i>	base running path has an 11-inch long strip of weeds in the middle of it	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	synthetic turf has 1 weed anywhere within it	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	none of the above Weeds issues found	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	

Additional Comments

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Trees

Evaluate: All sidewalk and park trees, including trees in Community Gardens and those Natural Area trees that are within the 10-foot zone bordering a path or another Feature. When a hole has been cut out of a pavement (such as a sidewalk) for the purpose of planting a single tree, the “tree well” that results is also evaluated here.

Trees in a Natural Area which are outside the 10 foot zone bordering a path or another Feature, should not be evaluated.

Do not evaluate mini lights strung directly on trees.

Signage is not evaluated here. (Evaluate it under Buildings & General Amenities or the Feature appropriate to its subject matter.)

If any treed area within the site has a sign saying it is “closed”, or is marked off with caution tape or cones, do not evaluate it.

Describe the closure here. Continue to evaluate all OPEN areas.

Element	Found Issue	Exact Location of found issue(s)	Description of found issue(s)
LITTER & DEBRIS <i>DO NOT evaluate natural debris here.</i>	2 trees which have a kite, large piece of litter, or other abandoned object in their canopies	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	1 tree well contains a hypodermic needle , condom, feces, feces-filled bag or broken glass	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	5 “ larger ” pieces of litter are in 1 tree well (food wrappings, paper, plastic, pieces of clothing, etc., which are 1 inch long or longer)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	10 “ small ” pieces of litter are in 1 tree well (litter less than 1 inch long, like cigarette butts)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	none of the above Litter & Debris issues found	<input type="checkbox"/>	
PRUNING & EDGING	1 living tree or tree well plant impedes use of part of an athletic court, athletic field or CPA	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	1 living tree or tree well plant intrudes upon a path and causes its space to be less than 3 feet wide <u>and</u> head height	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	1 living tree or tree well plant obstructs viewing any sign, statue or art installation	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	1 living tree or tree well plant prevents access to any handrail or amenity	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	none of the above Pruning & Edging issues found	<input type="checkbox"/>	
TREE CONDITION	1 tree is dead A tree trunk with all limbs removed should be considered to be a “dead tree”.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	1 tree has 3 dead limbs which are 4-1/2” in diameter or larger	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	1 tree has fallen so that it now impedes use of a path, amenity or other Feature	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	1 limb 4-1/2” in diameter or larger is hanging from a tree	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	none of the above Tree Condition issues found	<input type="checkbox"/>	
VANDALISM	chalk graffiti (in any amount)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	1 printed graffiti is on a tree	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	1 sticker is on a tree	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	none of the above Vandalism issues found	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Trees

Element	Found Issue	Exact Location of found issue(s)	Description of found issue(s)
VINES <i>DO NOT evaluate trees which are in Natural Areas or Community Gardens here.</i>	ivy is growing in the branches of 1 tree (regardless of the height of the tree) <i>DO NOT evaluate dead ivy.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	ivy is growing 5+ feet up the trunk of 1 tree <i>DO NOT evaluate dead ivy.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	none of the above Vines issues found	<input type="checkbox"/>	
WEEDS	1 patch of weeds 11 inches wide <u>and</u> long is in 1 tree well	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	the above Weeds issue was not found	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	this site has no tree wells	<input type="checkbox"/>	



Additional Comments

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CITY & COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Office of the Controller

City Services Auditor, City Performance

PARK MAINTENANCE STANDARDS:

**Fiscal Year 2014-15
Annual Report**



November 24, 2015



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report contains a summary and analysis of park evaluations performed between July 1, 2014 and June 30, 2015 and recommendations for improving the park evaluation and maintenance program. This is the first year that the Controller's Office and Recreation and Park Department (RPD) staff evaluated parks based on new park standards, which build on the previous standards to provide greater clarity, reduce evaluator interpretation, and allow for deeper analysis of the results.

Highlights

Ten years after the development of the original park maintenance standards, the park evaluation program passed a major milestone in fiscal year 2014-15 with the implementation of revised park evaluation standards. The new standards were the results of two years of concerted intradepartmental effort, involving review and feedback by front-line custodial and gardener staff, as well as manager and administrator input. The new standards provide a greater level of detail about park maintenance which will allow RPD to better understand common successes and challenges in a variety of park features and provide more complete information to the public.

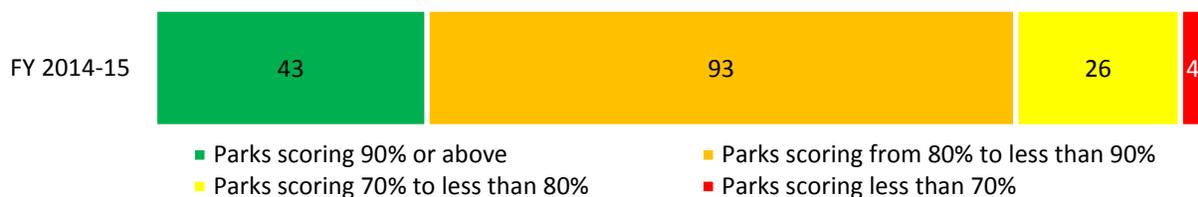


Mountain Lake Park

The citywide average park score for fiscal year 2014-15 was 85.2 percent. While it is not possible to directly compare this citywide average with prior years, both departments expected scores to be lower than in prior years since the new standards are more objective and comprehensive.

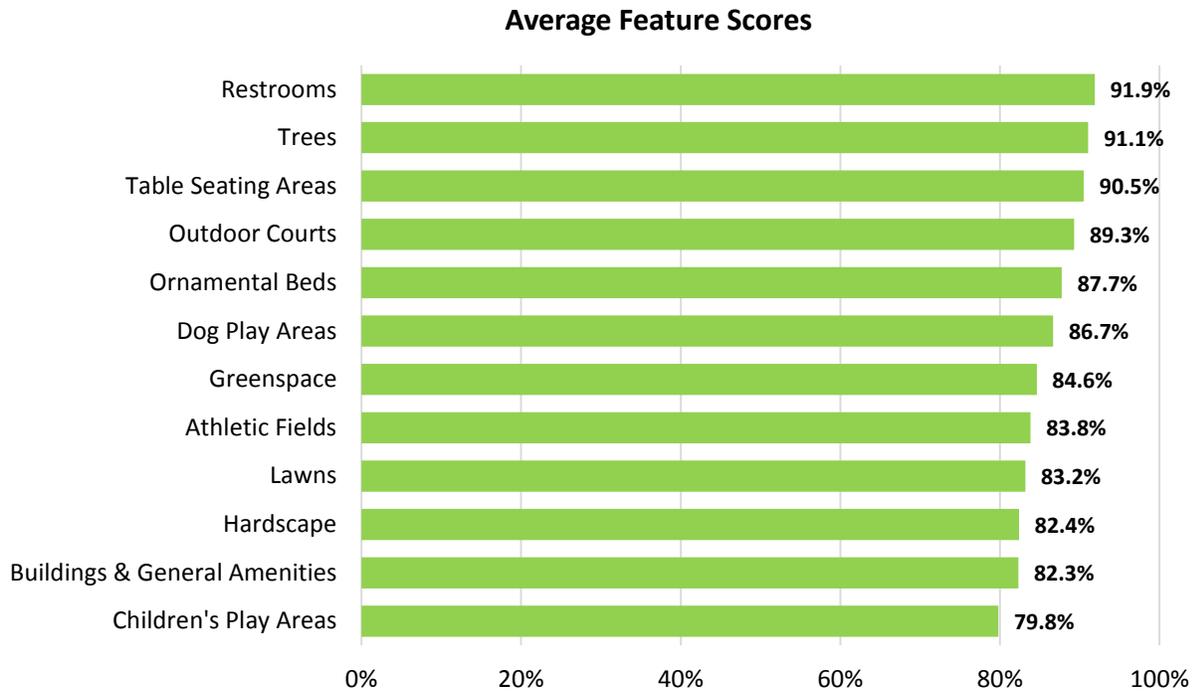
RESULTS

- The citywide annual park evaluation score was 85.2 percent. Most parks scored between 80 and 90 percent with 43 parks scoring above 90 percent and only 4 parks scoring below 70 percent. In general, a score of 85 percent means a park is well maintained and in good condition.



- District 2 (87.5 percent) had the highest average district score, while District 11 (78.1 percent) had the lowest average district score. There is a 9.4 percent spread between the highest and lowest scoring district.
- The highest scoring park was Cabrillo Playground in District 1 and the lowest scoring park was Gilman Playground in District 10. Nine of the ten high scoring parks had recent capital improvements as part of the 2008 and 2012 Clean and Safe Neighborhood Parks Bonds.

- Restrooms (91.9 percent) were the highest scoring feature and Children’s Play Areas (79.8 percent) were the lowest scoring. Children’s Play Areas’ most common issues included concerns such as sand and rubber surfacing not meeting the standards, as well as paint and graffiti issues.



RECOMMENDATIONS

The report includes four recommendations for RPD to improve the park maintenance standards program and park maintenance generally by incorporating evaluation data into its operational planning. Specifically, RPD should:

- Continuously assess RPD’s use of park evaluation data to improve park maintenance activities and develop new reports based on the implementation of the new standards.
- Use evaluation data to strategically plan for improvements to consistently low-performing parks, regions, or certain facilities or features. RPD should also review the parks that experience the greatest changes in park scores and identify the maintenance or management approaches that worked to improve scores.
- Continue to provide quarterly outreach to staff in the form of trainings, newsletters, brown bag sessions, or other means to provide current information, refresh staff understanding of the evaluation guidelines, answer questions about the evaluation process, and provide feedback about the park evaluation program.
- Dedicate resources to update the maps and features list for each evaluated site. Some maps are more than eight years old.

Appendix C. Management Comments

Following this page are management's comments to the audit findings and recommendations, as well as the City Auditor's Office's clarification and rebuttal to the issues discussed in management's response.



Date: June 17, 2016
To: Patrick H. West, City Manager
From: Marie Knight, Director of Parks, Recreation and Marine
For: Laura L. Doud, City Auditor
Subject: Park Maintenance Audit - Management Action Plan

PH West
Marie Knight

The Department of Parks, Recreation and Marine (Department) would like to thank the City Auditor and staff for their time and effort in reviewing the Department's park grounds maintenance activities. The review was conducted in a professional, productive, and collaborative way.

The Department's management team agrees with the intent of the recommendations to enhance available funding and to improve contract compliance and grounds maintenance practices. We will work diligently to implement the recommendations of the audit where we are in agreement and have the resources. As with all Departments within the City organization, we have limited resources and cannot always provide the overall level of services or management desired. Unfortunately, a number of the recommendations, while excellent for a department with full resources, must be weighed along with our other funding and service challenges.

Our responses are a product of providing the best services feasible under fiscally constrained conditions. Those constraints apply to all areas, including capital, maintenance and administration. As an example, it is estimated that a minimum of \$2.5 million in annual funding would be needed to implement the basic concepts of the recommended park tree maintenance plan, with an additional \$6.2 million in one-time needs to remove trees compromised by the drought or advanced age. That type of funding has not been available.

Once again, the Department appreciates the City Auditor's efforts to help improve our services to the community. The entire Department of Parks, Recreation and Marine team takes great pride in our four-time, nationally recognized "Gold Medal" programs, services, and facilities. With a brand new park maintenance management team now in place, we are confident that many of the audit recommendations will complement the many industry best practice changes already being implemented.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 570-3170.

Attachment

cc: Tom Modica, Assistant City Manager
Arturo Sanchez, Deputy City Manager
Debbie Ellis, Assistant City Auditor
Stephen Scott, Business Operations Bureau Manager
Hurley Owens, Maintenance Operations Bureau Manager

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN

Parks, Recreation and Marine Department

Park Maintenance Audit

No.	Recommendation	Priority	Page #	Agree or Disagree	Responsible Party	Action Plan / Explanation for Disagreement	Target Date for Implementation
1.1	Reassess all park and recreation related fees to determine whether a higher level of cost recovery can be attained to include the cost of park landscape and tree maintenance.	H	12	Disagree ¹	Business Operations and Community Recreation Services Bureaus	The Department agrees that all fees should be regularly reviewed to determine the appropriate level of cost recovery. The Department conducts this review regularly culminating in a fee hearing before the Parks and Recreation Commission. It should be noted, however, that the cost recovery analysis may not result in increased fees or full cost recovery. It has been determined that fees for some programs and services should remain free, or at a lower level, to minimize any financial barriers to access.	Existing
	<i>1.1.a - Revisit all adult sports and youth club team fees. The fees for permits to use athletic fields and park facilities could include the cost for ongoing park maintenance.</i>	H	12	Agree	Community Recreation Services Bureau - Field Permits and Adult Sports Offices	The Department agrees with this recommendation and has already begun a review process. This review will assess different field allocation models, field maintenance needs, and corresponding fees. Any revisions to the fee structure would need to be approved via a public hearing of the City's Parks and Recreation Commission and City Council. Any changes to fees impacting youth sports organizations would be implemented in phases with up to one year 's notice so they can budget and market accordingly. The Target Date for Implementation already factors in this phased approach.	10/1/17
	<i>1.1.b - Revise the Park and Recreation Facilities Fee to include a provision for ongoing maintenance of parklands. Municipal Code Chapter 18.18 imposes a park impact fee on new residential development to fund parkland acquisition and recreation improvements, but restricts the funds from being used for maintenance.</i>	H	13	Disagree	City Council ²	While the Department agrees with the intent of this recommendation to generate additional revenue, we disagree with modifying the allowable uses of the Park and Recreation Facilities Fees. These fees are imposed on development for the purpose of ensuring that the impacts of new development are mitigated through the addition of new parkland and amenities. Unfortunately, the fees are one-time in nature and do not provide an ongoing stream of revenue to support day-to-day maintenance operations.	

¹ The City Auditor's Office corrected management response to "Disagree," because the management explanation actually expresses disagreement with the recommendation. The management response describes an existing review process that does not consider maintenance costs in cost recovery, which is suggested by this recommendation.

² The City Auditor's Office corrected the Responsible Party for this recommendation from the "Business Operations Bureau," as provided by PRM, to "City Council" since revising the Park and Recreation Facilities Fee would require City Council action.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN

Parks, Recreation and Marine Department

Park Maintenance Audit

No.	Recommendation	Priority	Page #	Agree or Disagree	Responsible Party	Action Plan / Explanation for Disagreement	Target Date for Implementation
1.2	Consider selling the naming rights for parks, park facilities and other park features. These would include parks, community centers, dog parks, fields, gardens, trees, fountains, and other park features. We believe this presents an opportunity to engage the community and private sector in investing in our local community. Other communities, such as the County of San Diego, have successfully implemented naming rights programs.	H	13	Disagree	Business Operations Bureau	The Department agrees that naming rights and sponsorships can generate some needed, one-time revenue. The Department already has a City Council-approved Sponsorship Program and actively looks for sponsorship opportunities under the established guidelines. The Department, however, disagrees that this is a viable way to structurally fund day-to-day park maintenance operations as the funds generated from such a program are typically smaller, one-time in nature, and/or for a short period of time.	
1.3	Develop a funding or financing plan that explores alternative funding sources, such as grants, donor programs and private-public partnerships.	H	13	Disagree	Business Operations Bureau	The Department agrees that outside funding from grants, donor programs and public/private partnerships can help provide needed one-time financial resources. The Department currently has an internal Grants Committee tasked with identifying potential funding opportunities. The Department, however, disagrees that this is a viable way to sustain day-to-day park maintenance operations as the funds generated from such a program are typically one-time, or for a short period of time. Park maintenance activities haven't traditionally been attractive funding opportunities to outside funders.	
2.1	Modify and update existing strategic plan documents for park landscape and park trees to specifically address maintenance requirements, expected funding standards, and criteria for park expansion maintenance.	H	16	Disagree	Business Operations and Maintenance Operations Bureaus	<p>The Department agrees the Strategic Plan is due to be updated, and should include statements to ensure any newly developed areas are provided sufficient maintenance budgets consistent with the standards of existing areas. The Department, however, disagrees that this planning document should contain maintenance requirements.</p> <p>These planning efforts are typically a higher level overview of goals and objectives, extensive, lengthy and involve all stakeholders to produce a strategic roadmap for the future. Maintenance activities are not typically included in a strategic planning document. When resources are available to undertake this effort, the plan will contain City Council, City Manager and all stakeholders input.</p>	

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN

Parks, Recreation and Marine Department

Park Maintenance Audit

No.	Recommendation	Priority	Page #	Agree or Disagree	Responsible Party	Action Plan / Explanation for Disagreement	Target Date for Implementation
	<i>2.1.a - Gather stakeholder input and regularly communicate these plans to policy makers and the general public.</i>	H	16	Disagree ³	Business Operations and Maintenance Operations Bureaus	The Department agrees that regular communication with stakeholders is important, and accomplishes this through almost daily interaction with the City Council Offices, formal monthly City Council District Office briefings with Department executive management, monthly Park and Recreation Commission public meetings, Youth Sports League biannual meetings, regular meetings with various neighborhood associations, and outreach at community events and meetings. The Department will continue to look for further opportunities within in its available resources to expand its outreach efforts.	Ongoing
	<i>2.1.b - Ensure ample discussion at staff and Council levels during the planning of any new park acquisition or renovation projects regarding the ongoing maintenance needs and costs associated with these projects.</i>	H	16	Agree	Business Operations and Maintenance Operations Bureaus	The Department agrees. All council actions with recommendations impacting development or improvements to park property have contained on-going maintenance cost information since the fall of 2015. The Department will work to ensure at each step in the development planning process, that potential future costs are discussed, projected and reported.	Ongoing
2.2	Adopt tree and landscape maintenance performance measures, and develop a park inspection rating program that would allow the City to track how it is meeting established metrics and expectations for park and tree conditions.	H	16	Disagree	Maintenance Operations Bureau	The City's expectations for park conditions is consistent with horticultural standards and is included in the grounds landscape maintenance contract specifications. The contract specifications include performance measures. The Department believes the desired park maintenance conditions can be achieved by ensuring contractor compliance with contract specifications and by maximizing its use of the City's current technology resources by further implementing features from the City Works Work Order System. Implementation of this newly developed Contract Evaluation System began in April 2016 and is expected to continue throughout the next year. This system has mobile capabilities, a set of standard contract performance requirements for each maintenance area, collects data, and will be able to provide management with specific, detailed performance information upon completion. The Department does not believe a separate park inspection rating program is necessary.	

³. The City Auditor's Office corrected management response to "Disagree," because this recommendation is directly related to the prior one to modify and update existing strategic plan documents to address park and tree maintenance requirements. This recommendation calls for the communication of these revised strategic documents to City Council and the general public. But, since management disagrees with revising the strategic documents in this manner, it could not agree with this recommendation.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN

Parks, Recreation and Marine Department

Park Maintenance Audit

No.	Recommendation	Priority	Page #	Agree or Disagree	Responsible Party	Action Plan / Explanation for Disagreement	Target Date for Implementation
	<i>2.2.a - Performance measures and expectations for park conditions ought be realistic and reflective of available funding.</i>	H	16	Agree	Maintenance Operations Bureau	The City's expectations for park conditions is consistent with horticultural standards and is included in the grounds landscape maintenance contract specifications. These specifications have developed over many years of operations, and the scope of work is directly reflective of the City's current operating environment and allocated financial resources. Recently, the funding and purchasing authority of these contracts was adjusted to ensure they are consistent with the areas requiring service. The Contract Evaluation System contains the contract performance standards and will allow the Department to more effectively and efficiently ensure contract compliance.	6/30/17
	<i>2.2.b - Provide each park a rating for overall condition, safety and cleanliness, which would be comprised of established ratable park features.</i>	H	17	Disagree	Maintenance Operations Bureau	Given the City's current environmental and economic condition, the Department is focusing on vendor compliance ratings vs. subjective ratings. There are a great many variables that may influence such ratings that are beyond the control of the Department . These include the continuing drought, tree age and disease, homelessness, vandalism, and the overuse of playing fields and park amenities. The Department is actively working with the City's Purchasing Agent to update the contract specifications and complete a bid process in 2017.	
	<i>2.2.c - Communicate the results of the inspection program on a regular basis to City Council and to the general public.</i>	M	17	Disagree ⁴	Maintenance Operations Bureau	Once fully implemented, reports utilizing the Contract Evaluation System data will be distributed as appropriate .	6/30/17

⁴ The City Auditor's Office corrected management response to "Disagree," because this recommendation is directly related to the prior recommendation to develop a park inspection rating system. This recommendation calls for PRM to regularly communicate the results of the park inspection rating system to City Council and the general public. But, since management disagrees with implementing such a rating system, it could not agree with this recommendation.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN

Parks, Recreation and Marine Department

Park Maintenance Audit

No.	Recommendation	Priority	Page #	Agree or Disagree	Responsible Party	Action Plan / Explanation for Disagreement	Target Date for Implementation
2.3	<p>Develop and adopt a park tree maintenance plan that is based on a five-year tree trimming frequency schedule. The plan should consider strategies for other maintenance activities that are also critical for the health and longevity of the tree population:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watering • Tree removal • Mulching • Pest and disease management • Soil and nutrient management 	H	17	Disagree	Maintenance Operations Bureau	<p>The Department agrees with the importance of having an Urban Forest Plan addressing all aspects of the system. It also agrees that a five-year tree trimming cycle is desirable. However, the Department does not believe it is feasible for the foreseeable future. To implement a five-year tree trimming cycle, the Department would need an estimated \$532,000 annually (structurally funded). To further implement the recommended park tree maintenance plan, it is estimated that an minimum of an additional \$2 million annually (structurally funded) would be needed for irrigation water for all landscape including trees, and \$6.2 million in one-time resources would be needed to remove trees compromised by the drought and advanced age. Additional resources are also required for soil and nutrient management and pest and disease management.</p> <p>Development of a formal plan can be quite costly and lengthy when resources are limited and immediate action is needed. Balancing the operational needs of the Department with the potential resources available, the Department has developed an operations plan utilizing its new, certified and highly credentialed, management staff focusing on service delivery. The Department will continue to address its urban forest issues through the annual budget development process allowing for citywide needs to be prioritized and funded accordingly.</p>	

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN

Parks, Recreation and Marine Department

Park Maintenance Audit

No.	Recommendation	Priority	Page #	Agree or Disagree	Responsible Party	Action Plan / Explanation for Disagreement	Target Date for Implementation
3.1	The City should have appropriate processes in place covering acquisition of equipment to ensure the equipment is assigned timely for City use or auctioned off to third parties.	H	18	Agree	Department of Financial Management, Fleet Services	While the Department of Financial Management believes the City's equipment and acquisition assignment processes are sufficient, in this case they were not properly applied due to the uniqueness of the transaction with the vendor. We will provide additional training in this area to ensure these assignments are properly completed in the future. As an update, five of the six registered vehicles have been reassigned to other City departments and the sixth vehicle is awaiting final paperwork from the DMV. The equipment items have been offered to several other departments (with no takers) and are awaiting auction. The City's auction contract has expired and has an open RFP that closes on June 22, 2016. An interim auction agreement is in development.	7/31/16
4.1	Amend the contract scope of work to reflect realistic service levels and frequencies consistent with desired park conditions and available funding.	L	20	Agree	Business Operations and Maintenance Operations Bureaus	The grounds landscape maintenance service contracts were amended in April 2016 to ensure the contracts accurately reflected all service areas and had a contingency to allow for new areas and service changes through the end of the contract term. Given that this is the last year of the contract, all available staff resources are now focused on planning efforts to complete a bid process for this large scope of services as efficiently as possible. Department management from both the Maintenance Operations Bureau and the Business Operations Bureau are working with Financial Management's Purchasing Division in a joint effort to ensure as effective a contract as possible is awarded in 2017.	6/30/17
4.2	Amend the contract to accurately reflect all service locations.	H	20	Agree	Maintenance Operations Bureau	See No. 4.1	
4.3	Analyze work order and inspection data regularly to react and rectify problems as quickly as possible, as well as to identify maintenance trends and needs for resource planning.	M	20	Agree	Maintenance Operations Bureau	See No. 2.2. As the Contract Evaluation System is implemented, the recorded data will be available to analyze and generate reports to inform management operational decisions.	6/30/17

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN

Parks, Recreation and Marine Department

Park Maintenance Audit

No.	Recommendation	Priority	Page #	Agree or Disagree	Responsible Party	Action Plan / Explanation for Disagreement	Target Date for Implementation
4.4	Continue to improve contract monitoring and park maintenance, including:	M	20				
	<i>4.4.a - Standardizing contract monitoring training on evaluation standards and maintenance priorities.</i>	M	20	Agree	Maintenance Operations Bureau	See No. 2.2. Appropriate training is being provided as each phase of the Contract Evaluation System is implemented. To date, staff have been trained on completing the standardized, electronic and mobile data sheets to ensure consistent monitoring across all contracted service areas.	6/30/17
	<i>4.4.b - Streamlining and standardizing the day-to-day communication between PRM staff and the contractors.</i>	M	20	Agree	Maintenance Operations Bureau	See No. 2.2. The Contract Evaluation System has built in communication tools to assist electronic communications with staff monitoring the contract and the applicable vendor.	6/30/17
	<i>4.4.c - Exploring the use of new technologies, such as a work order management system and handheld devices to better document park conditions and collect data, as well as to improve the tracking of the maintenance work performed by the contractors and any work performed by City staff.</i>	M	20	Agree	Maintenance Operations Bureau	See No. 2.2.	Complete
	<i>4.4.d - Increasing the role of the PRM Gardeners to perform some maintenance work.</i>	M	20	Disagree	Maintenance Operations Bureau	Gardeners in PRM have always performed maintenance tasks and continue to do so on a regular basis.	
4.5	Have City Council or any other department sponsoring events at parks and park facilities pay for the maintenance prepping and clean-up.	H	20	Disagree	City Council and Parks and Recreation Commission⁵	Although we believe all use fees should be paid by all users, this is a policy decisions and any policy changes regarding fees for use of park facilities is at the discretion of the Parks and Recreation Commission and City Council.	
5.1	Recover the \$80,800 paid in error to the contractor, Azteca Landscape, Inc.	H	23	Agree	Business Operations Bureau	The Department is working with the various stakeholders to resolve.	9/31/16
5.2	Ensure there are proper processes in place to implement Bid Options (optional services or service areas) in a new landscape maintenance contract, as well as a review process to ensure that invoice amounts reflect contract amounts.	H	23	Agree	Maintenance Operations Bureau	See No. 4.1. As a part of the planning process to complete a bid process for the new contracts, appropriate process will be developed to ensure appropriate award and implementation of the contract(s).	6/30/17

⁵ The City Auditor's Office corrected the Responsible Party from the "Business Operations and Community Recreation Services Bureaus" to "City Council and Parks and Recreation Commission," since it is they who can take action on this matter.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN

Parks, Recreation and Marine Department

Park Maintenance Audit

No.	Recommendation	Priority	Page #	Agree or Disagree	Responsible Party	Action Plan / Explanation for Disagreement	Target Date for Implementation
5.3	Require the contractors to provide appropriate backup documentation for supplemental charges, such as description of labor activity, dates and hours, and receipts for material purchases.	H	23	Agree	Maintenance Operations Bureau	The Department will ensure compliance with contract terms.	7/31/16
5.4	Review what constitutes supplemental work, and clearly define the criteria for maintenance activities to qualify for supplemental work payment.	M	23	Agree	Maintenance Operations Bureau	See No. 4.1. All areas of the contract will be reviewed and updated as appropriate in the new contract bid process.	6/30/17
	<i>5.4.a - This can be currently accomplished through an amendment to the contract. Providing clarity to the definition of supplemental work could be accomplished sooner rather than later.</i>	M	23	Disagree	Maintenance Operations Bureau	See No. 4.1. An amendment to the existing contracts is not necessary. All areas of the contract will be reviewed and updated as appropriate in the contract bid process for the next contract year.	
6.1	Develop and implement best practice inventory management policies and procedures, including:		25				
	<i>6.1.a - Ensure segregation of duties surrounding the authorization of transactions, custody of assets, and recording of transactions.</i>	H	25	Agree	Business Operations and Maintenance Operations Bureaus	The Department will implement appropriate internal controls consistent with its operating environment.	6/30/17
	<i>6.1.b - Identify and utilize an existing software within the City to serve as an inventory tracking system.</i>	L	25	Agree	Maintenance Operations Bureau	The Department agrees that other technology-based solutions may be available to provide for inventory management, but in order to explore, evaluate and implement at this time at least one additional staff member at a fully loaded cost of approximately \$80,000 would be needed. The Department will also explore potential efficiencies created by the Citywide ERP Solution.	9/30/18
	<i>6.1.c - Conduct regular inventory counts and reconcile with existing records.</i>	L	25	Agree	Maintenance Operations Bureau	See No. 6.1.a	6/30/17
	<i>6.1.d - Identify part items that are consistently used by contractors that can be added to the inventory.</i>	L	25	Agree	Maintenance Operations Bureau	The Department will use its available resources to implement effective procurement practices. Once the reporting phase of the Contract Evaluation System is implemented, additional data through the City Works Work Order System may be available to provide further assistance.	6/30/17

Priority

H – High Priority - The recommendation pertains to a serious or materially significant audit finding or control weakness. Due to the seriousness or significance of the matter, immediate management attention and appropriate corrective action is warranted.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN

Parks, Recreation and Marine Department

Park Maintenance Audit

No.	Recommendation	Priority	Page #	Agree or Disagree	Responsible Party	Action Plan / Explanation for Disagreement	Target Date for Implementation
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M – Medium Priority - The recommendation pertains to a moderately significant or potentially serious audit finding or control weakness. Reasonably prompt corrective action should be taken by management to address the matter. Recommendation should be implemented no later than six months.

L – Low Priority - The recommendation pertains to an audit finding or control weakness of relatively minor significance or concern. The timing of any corrective action is left to management's discretion.

Yellow areas - to be completed by the department



LAURA DOUD

MEMORANDUM

Date: June 27, 2016
To: Patrick H. West, City Manager
Marie Knight, Director of Parks, Recreation and Marine
CC: Mayor and City Council
From: Laura Doud, City Auditor
Subject: Rebuttal to Management Comments on the Park Maintenance Audit

We recently received the Parks, Recreation and Marine Department's (PRM) management response to our Park Maintenance Audit, and submit this rebuttal to clarify the relevancy of the audit's recommendations. Without offering solutions, management's response suggests that PRM prefers to continue the same shortsighted, business-as-usual approach, which likely leads to a continued state of decline of City parks and trees.

This Office is committed to an audit process that fosters open and honest communication with the auditee during every project. The entire process is based on ensuring a transparent process where both our Office and the Department are fully aware of the issues and neither party is surprised about the information included in the report or management's response.

It is perplexing to receive management's response which rejects reasonable recommendations. During the audit process, management had expressed general understanding of and agreement with the audit findings and recommendations. The level of disagreement expressed in management's response was never communicated to us during discussions regarding the findings and recommendations. Examples of specific items and areas in the management response that are disconcerting include:

- PRM rejects Recommendation #2.1 to include maintenance requirements and performance standards in an updated Department Strategic Plan, arguing these planning efforts are typically a higher level of goals and objectives that provide a strategic roadmap for the future.

While we understand that this is not how PRM usually develops its Strategic Plan, the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) says otherwise. As part of its 2014 National Accreditation Standards, CAPRA describes as fundamental to effective park planning the development of a comprehensive Park and Recreation

System Master Plan that provides recommendations for the “provision of facilities, programs and services; parkland acquisition and development; maintenance and operations; and administration and management.” CAPRA further recommends the inclusion in this Master Plan the level of service standards, as well as the development of a Strategic Plan as a tool to implement this Master Plan. This is precisely why the audit recommends PRM look beyond their current operating approach.

- PRM disagrees with many of the audit’s recommendations to expand funding opportunities, such as Recommendation #1.2 to offer naming rights sponsorships. PRM states that these ideas offer only “one-time” funds. But yet, the City continually focuses on the unfunded millions of dollars in park needs, most of which are immediate, one-time needs. For example, The City Manager’s Office estimates \$113 million for the renovation of the irrigation system. In the management response, PRM estimates \$6.2 million in a one-time need to remove dead trees.

Nowhere in our audit report did we assert that these funding ideas are a “viable way to structurally fund day-to-day park maintenance operations.” Rather, expanding resources for one-time improvements can actually free up funds for ongoing park and tree maintenance. In addition, an effective, sustained sponsorship program can be capable of consistently generating funds.

- PRM rejects Recommendation #1.3 to develop a funding plan that explores alternative funding sources, such as grants, donor programs and public-private partnerships. This idea shares the same intent and spirit as the recent recommendation made by Councilmembers Mungo, Supernaw, Andrews and Richardson at the June 21, 2016 City Council meeting, when they recommended that PRM explore the development of an initiative to foster public-private partnerships that can offset costs for programming, improvements and maintenance.

If the City continues to face an escalating backlog of deferred repairs and improvements in our parks, it is unclear why the Department would reject the exploration of potential new revenue sources that have been successfully targeted by other jurisdictions. Furthermore, public-private partnerships can be a viable conduit for the Mayor’s policy priority to enhance economic development and business attraction.

- PRM rejects the development of an Urban Forest Master Plan, as well as the adoption of a five-year park tree trimming frequency schedule. The Department argues that such a frequency schedule is not financially

feasible, and that a tree Master Plan is too costly and lengthy. As underscored in the audit report and management response, the City's park trees are essential to our quality of life, but many are in dire condition. How we address these immediate tree needs, plan for future development, and allocate appropriate resources requires discussion of immediate and long-term needs, the impact of new development on tree health, and the true costs of maintaining a sustainable urban forest. We believe an Urban Forest Master Plan can facilitate this discussion.

It should be noted, PRM's current tree trimming contract allows the Department to expend up to \$483,000 per year, which is relatively close to PRM's estimate of \$532,000 per year made in its management response. However, as noted in the audit report, PRM typically spends a fraction of the budgeted funds allocated to park tree trimming. Given the amount of funds that have been approved by City Council for park tree maintenance, it is difficult to understand why PRM would consider this trimming standard unfeasible.

- PRM disagrees with Recommendation #1.1 to reassess all park and recreation related fees, including the development impact fee used for parkland acquisition, by considering the inclusion of park and tree maintenance costs. One of the goals of this recommendation is to determine whether a higher level of cost recovery can be realized by considering such costs when setting recreation fees, particularly sports team fees. During the audit, PRM staff had indicated that the review of such fees has been sporadic and cost recovery as defined by PRM does not consider the costs of park maintenance. While there is a need to maintain public accessibility to programs, it is also important to ensure transparency with respect to the true cost of service.

The Municipal Code currently restricts the use of the Park and Recreation Facilities Fee (Fee) on park maintenance. The Fee, which is imposed on developers to mitigate the impact of new development on park accessibility, can be used only for parkland acquisition and recreation improvement. The audit recommends expanding the allowable uses of the Fee to set aside funds for the ongoing maintenance of new parklands, because it is not viable to continue to add new park spaces without adequate funding to maintain them. Reviewing park and recreation fees to possibly recover some of the maintenance costs is a prudent, responsible approach. It is not a novel or radical idea.

- PRM rejects the recommendation to develop clearer maintenance performance measures along with a park inspection rating system. PRM

argues that the City's expectations are consistent with horticulture standards and are communicated through the contract's maintenance specifications. However, as we noted in the report, we were told by PRM staff and contractors that the contract specifications are rarely referenced on a day-to-day basis. They are highly technical and convoluted, and have not been useful in ensuring vendor compliance. If these specifications are rarely used on a day-to-day basis, it is safe to assume that the City's expectations are not communicated to those directly responsible for landscape maintenance.

The audit recommends that the City simplify and develop broad performance measures that can provide PRM, the maintenance contractors and also elected officials and the general public with one common set of indicators for park and tree conditions. The Cities of New York and San Francisco have successfully implemented such park inspection rating systems. We acknowledge that PRM is trying to develop its "Contract Evaluation System," which could lead to a more systematic maintenance program that PRM has previously lacked. However, the Contract Evaluation System would be based on the same convoluted contract specifications that made contract oversight extremely difficult and communication of service performance, particularly to City Council and the general public, almost impossible.

- Many of the changes to contract funding and monitoring activities noted in the management response were made during or after the audit. For example, additional money to partially fund new parks was recently requested from City Council in April 2016. In addition, according to PRM staff during the audit, Gardeners only recently have been assigned maintenance tasks.

In conclusion, we are alarmed by management's reluctance to consider anything but their current business-as-usual strategy. We consistently hear from the City there are insufficient funds, personnel and other resources to meet service expectation levels. With the constraints facing this City, management must be proactive in seeking non-traditional solutions to these ongoing challenges. If not, the condition of the City's parks and trees will continue to decline.