NEW YORKERS
FOR PARKS

A coalition of civic, greening,
recreation, and economic
development organizations

The Report Card on Parks 2003

An Independent Assessment of New York City's Neighborhood Parks

The Report Card on Parks 2003

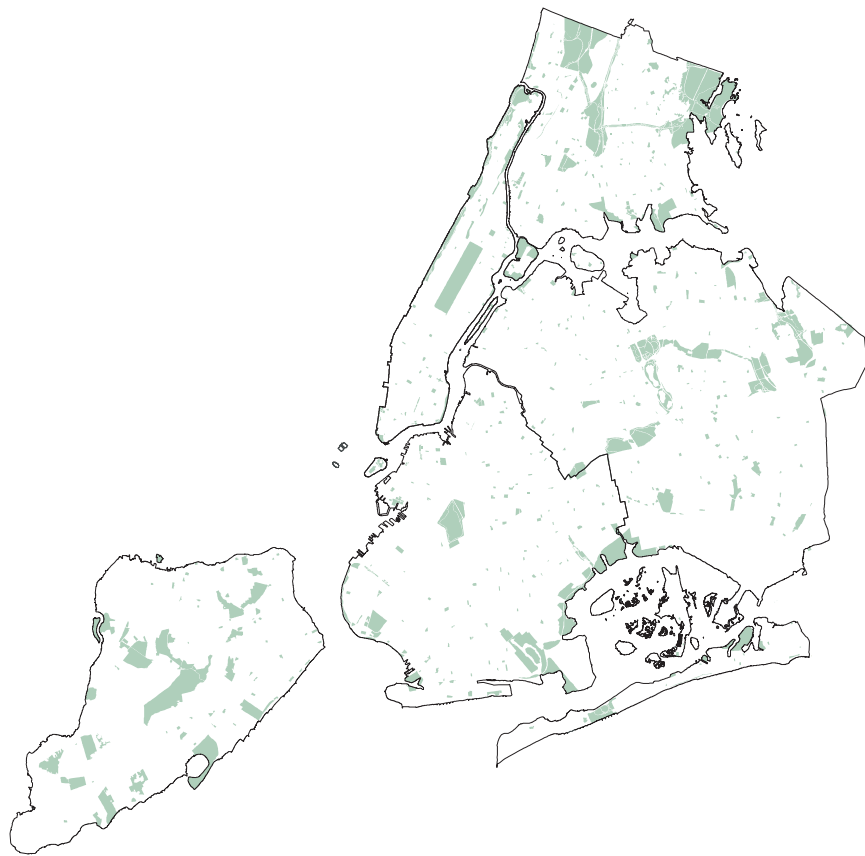*An Independent Assessment of New York City's Neighborhood Parks*

Table of Contents

Cover photo by Peter Wohlsen.

New Yorkers for Parks

New Yorkers for Parks (NY4P) is a citywide coalition of civic, greening, recreation, and economic development organizations that promotes and protects parks and open spaces.

NY4P:

- Works tirelessly to promote and protect the city's 28,700 acres of parkland and 1,700 public park properties;

- Raises awareness about the importance of parks as a vital public service essential to strengthening the city and its residents;

- Serves as an independent watchdog that conducts research and works toward creating a more equitable and efficient parks and recreational system;

- Activates public discussion regarding best practices for the funding, managing and designing of parks and recreational programs.

Why a Report Card on Parks?

NY4P's Report Card on Parks is an effort to demonstrate quantitatively the varying quality of neighborhood parks throughout the five boroughs. There are several hundred neighborhood parks in New York City. As this report shows, these smaller, low-profile parks are in need of greater investment. Unlike the larger, high-profile parks of the city, neighborhood parks are often solely dependent on public funding. In far too many communities, New York is not making the grade in neighborhood parks, or with their users, by failing to provide open bathrooms, working water fountains and green ballfields.

The Report Card has three goals:

To provide communities with an assessment of how their neighborhood park is performing in comparison to other parks in the City. This easily accessible on-line information will help communities advocate for improved services in their neighborhood parks.

ACTIVE RECREATION SPACE

DRINKING FOUNTAINS

BATHROOMS

SITTING AREAS

NY4P evaluates NYC's neighborhood parks in 8 Major Service Areas (MSAs), detailed above. Overall, the Immediate Environment performed the best, with a citywide average of 89%. A number of MSAs score in the mid-range including Sitting Areas (83%), Pathways (83%) and Playgrounds (80%). Passive Recreation Space scored reasonably well with a citywide rating of 70%. There are, however, MSAs in need of attention, including Active Recreation Space (66%), Drinking Fountains (53%), and Bathrooms (48%).

2 To provide an independent assessment of neighborhood park performance from year to year against a defined minimum level of service. This will create accountability for providing both this defined level of service as well as improvements for every park throughout the five boroughs.

3 To spark debate among communities, public agencies and advocates about how best to improve and maintain neighborhood parks in need. The Report Card provides a valuable service by identifying parks in the greatest need, but more importantly, the Report Card indicates how we might begin to address that need. By highlighting those high-performing, as well as low-performing parks, best practices can be identified and implemented in select parks and incorporated system-wide.

Further, this analysis encourages a more efficient distribution of limited resources toward our parks and playgrounds that are most in need and assists in developing strategies for additional funding sources.

An Independent Look at Site Conditions: Park by Park

Although the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) does evaluate its properties using a comprehensive program, ratings are aggregated and published only at the citywide level in the Mayor's Management Report. In contrast, NY4P's Report Card is designed to provide an analysis of conditions on a park-by-park basis. It provides a statistical backing for what NY4P hears every day anecdotally from its constituents. Sometimes it is a word of praise: "My park was recently reconstructed and looks great – how can I get in touch with the park managers to thank them?"

Unfortunately, more often than not, it is frustration with unmet maintenance needs: "How can I get the comfort station in my local park reopened?" or "My little league team can't play on our neighborhood field because it's uneven and full of holes – how can I get the ballfield repaired for the spring season?" These neighborhood parks are the front and back yards of most New Yorkers – they deserve better.

Individual profiles of Report Card parks are available to the public on the NY4P website (www.ny4p.org).

PLAYGROUNDS

PATHWAYS

PASSIVE RECREATION SPACE

IMMEDIATE ENVIRONMENT

Summary of Methodology

In constructing the Report Card, NY4P focused on DPR "park" properties of between one and 20 acres, as these properties represent New York City's neighborhood parks. This defined a survey population of 220 small to mid-size parks. However, several of these parks could not be included in the study. For example, we did not survey those parks that were closed for capital improvement. Further, certain park properties, like skating rinks, amusement parks or forests with no user trails, have none of the Major Service Areas (see list on following page) and were not included in this report. Thus, the final survey universe consisted of 181 park properties.

GRADING THE PARKS

NY4P convened a focus group of park experts and community leaders to help define the eight Major Service Areas (MSA), along with a scale of weights to reflect the relative importance of different indicators. MSAs were weighted on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being the most important to a park user's experience). These service areas were evaluated on maintenance, cleanliness, safety and structural integrity.

Thus, for each of the 181 parks included in the survey, every applicable MSA was assigned a numerical score. A park's overall numerical score was calculated as a weighted average of these service area scores. The numerical scores were then converted to a final letter grade.

SURVEY MECHANISM

NY4P uses a comprehensive survey mechanism developed specifically for the Report Card on Parks to determine a park's rating. There are 8 Major Service Areas tracked through the survey mechanism that breakdown into 12 feature forms. Surveyors complete a survey feature form for each of the features found in a park. For example, if there are three drinking fountains in a park, a surveyor will complete three Drinking Fountain forms. In this way, a park will not be penalized for not having a particular Major Service Area. Surveyors answer a series of questions on the maintenance, cleanliness, safety and structural integrity of a feature. The total park score is based the percentage of features evaluated that are found in acceptable condition.

SURVEY WORK

Finally, NY4P staff conducted the survey on weekdays between July and September 2002, a high-use season for public parks. Teams of trained surveyors used handheld computers and digital cameras to complete an evaluation. For each MSA evaluated, digital photographs were taken; both survey forms and photos are stored as documentation of survey efforts and results.
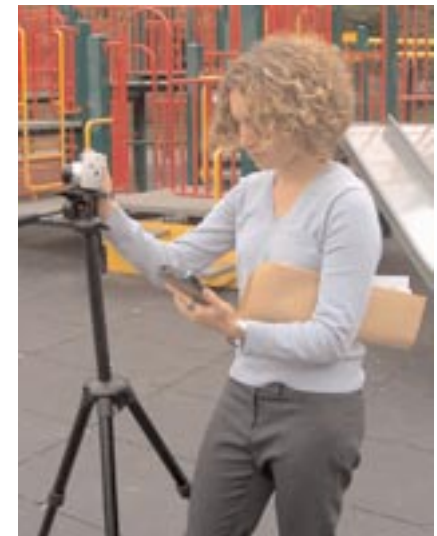
Teams of trained surveyors used handheld computers and digital cameras to complete an evaluation.

THE NY4P SURVEY IS EQUIPPED TO EVALUATE 12 DISTINCT PARK FEATURES AS PART OF 8 MAJOR SERVICE AREAS. FOR EXAMPLE EACH PARK'S INDIVIDUAL COURTS AND ATHLETIC FIELDS ARE EVALUATED SEPARATELY, BUT THE SCORES OF THESE FEATURES ARE COMBINED TO PRODUCE THE PARK'S SCORE FOR ACTIVE RECREATION SPACE.

ACTIVE RECREATION SPACE
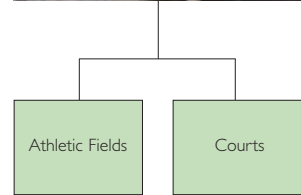
DRINKING FOUNTAINS

BATHROOMS

SITTING AREAS

Athletic Fields

Courts

PLAYGROUNDS

PATHWAYS
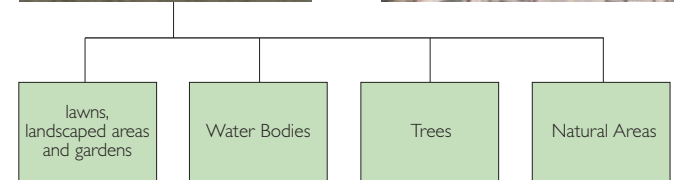
PASSIVE RECREATION SPACE

IMMEDIATE ENVIRONMENT

lawns, landscaped areas and gardens

Water Bodies

Trees

Natural Areas

Major Service Areas and Relative Weights

3 points

ACTIVE RECREATION SPACE
(courts; athletic fields)

3 points

DRINKING FOUNTAINS

4 points

BATHROOMS

5 points

SITTING AREAS

5 points

PLAYGROUNDS

3 points

PATHWAYS

5 points
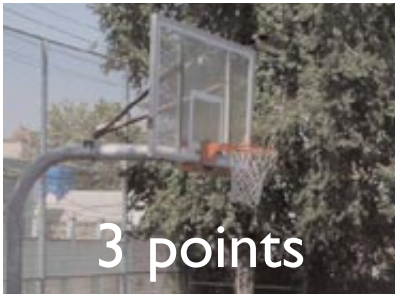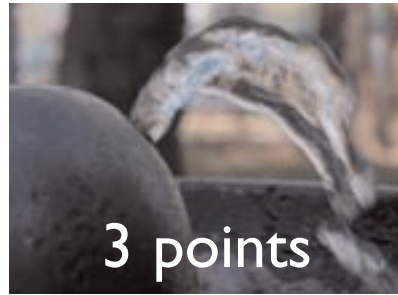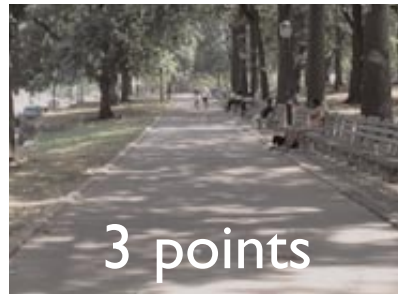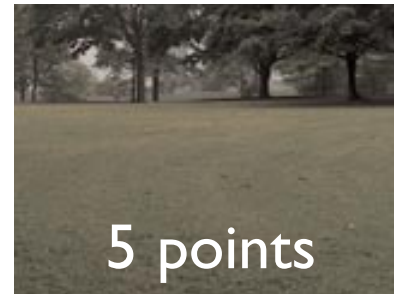
PASSIVE RECREATION SPACE
(lawns, landscaped areas and gardens;
natural areas; water bodies; and trees)

3 points
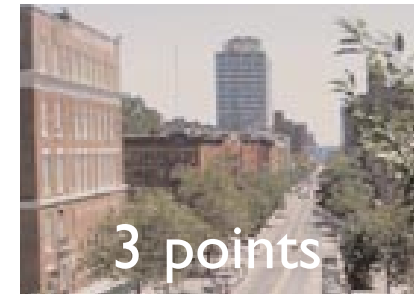
IMMEDIATE ENVIRONMENT

Each park was assigned a numerical score from 0 to 100 in each applicable MSA, based on the proportion of features in those service areas found to be in acceptable condition. This was done using an independently developed survey mechanism that is based on the DPR's Parks Inspection Program (PIP). Next, MSA scores were averaged by weight to give an overall numerical park score.

The survey is designed to fairly rate all features that are or should be available to a user visiting a park. By way of example, if a park has a bathroom facility that is locked or closed without explanation, it will receive a "0" for the bathroom rating. If the park does not have a bathroom it will not receive a score for bathrooms; a park will never be penalized for not having a particular Major Service Area.

For example, Hamilton Fish Park in Manhattan's Lower East Side received the following scores in an inspection:

Example: Hamilton Fish Park

COMPILING THE OVERALL SCORE FOR HAMILTON FISH PARK

Major Service Area	Major service area score…	multiplied by it's weight…	equals the final MSA score.
Active Recreation Space	86	x3	258
Drinking Fountains	100	x3	300
Bathrooms	100	x4	400
Sitting Areas	100	x5	500
Playgrounds	80	x5	400
Pathways	100	x3	300
Passive Recreation Space	92	x5	460
Immediate Environment	100	x3	300
COMBINED FINAL SCORE			2918

CONVERTING THE OVERALL SCORE TO A LETTER GRADE

FINAL SCORE (2918 divided by 31, the sum of the weighted MSA scores divided by the weights of the 8 MSAs.)   **94 or "A"**

Below is a chart detailing the raw score and letter grade affiliations. These affiliations were determined by a focus group of park managers and open space experts. Participants were brought to a sampling of neighborhood parks and asked to provide a letter grade for the park based on a brief description of the MSAs and a tour of the park. Once a numerical raw score was determined for each park, the chart below was used to assign it a letter grade.

Numerical Scores

Raw Numerical Grade
Letter Grade

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

Score/Grade associations developed by a focus group of park managers and open space experts.

Findings

Generally, there is an equal distribution of grades. However, , significant disparity exists between neighborhood parks surveyed. The difference in conditions at the City's highest performing park – Bryant Park in Manhattan (A+: 100%) – and at the City's lowest-performing park – University Woods in the Bronx (F: 19%) – is staggering. In fact, 43 of the 181 parks surveyed received a grade of A- or better, while 69 received a grade of D or F.

Bryant Park

100%

University Woods

19%
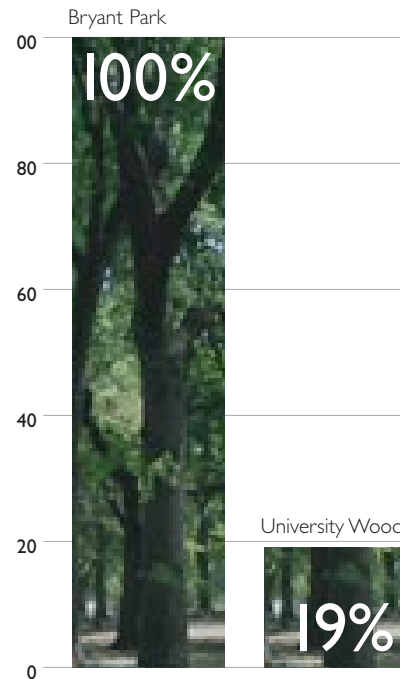
The Report Card survey documents considerable variance in park condition.

A: 21%
B: 19%
F: 17%
C: 24%
D: 19%

The percentage breakdown of grades was roughly equal. 43 parks received an A, 35 parks received a B, 34 parks received a C, 31 parks received a D, and 38 parks received an F. See Appendix A for a full listing of individual parks and their ratings.

10 Highest Performing Parks
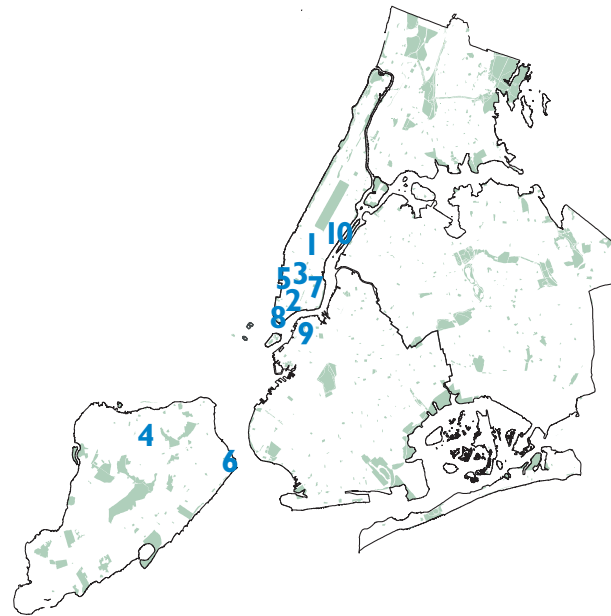
Rank	Park Name	Raw Score
1	BRYANT PARK	100
2	CITY HALL PARK	98
3	UNION SQUARE PARK	98
4	WESTERLEIGH PARK	98
5	JAMES J. WALKER PARK	98
6	ARTHUR VON BRIESEN PARK	98
7	STUYVESANT SQUARE	97
8	PUBLIC PLACE (BATTERY PARK CITY)	97
9	COLUMBUS PARK	96
10	ST. CATHERINE'S PARK	96

Map by CMAP (NYPIRG's Community Mapping Assistance Project.)

OF THE SURVEY'S 10 LOWEST-PERFORMING
PARKS, 3 ARE LOCATED IN QUEENS,
4 IN THE BRONX, 1 IN BROOKLYN, 1 IN
MANHATTAN AND 1 IN STATEN ISLAND.

10 Lowest Performing Parks
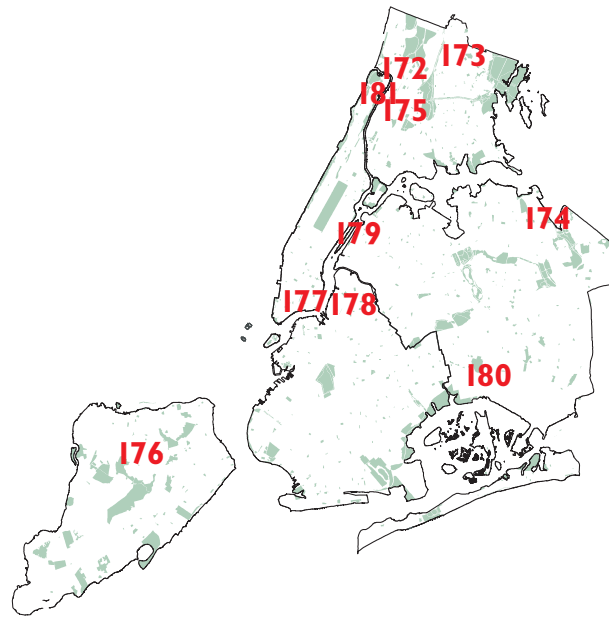
Rank	Park Name	Raw Score
172	JEROME PARK	43
173	EDENWALD PLAYGROUND	42
174	JOHN GOLDEN PARK	42
175	TREMONT PARK	39
176	INGRAM WOOD	38
177	COLEMAN PLAYGROUND	37
178	STERNBERG PARK	35
179	RAINEY PARK	32
180	SOUTHERN FIELDS	22
181	UNIVERSITY WOODS	19

Map by CMAP (NYPIRG's Community Mapping Assistance Project.)

'Sitting Areas', 'Sidewalks, Streets and Pathways' and 'Playgrounds' all received a B average in the survey scoring at 83%, 83% and 80%, respectively. This is attributable to the fact that the DPR was able to devote significant institutional resources over the last eight years to playgrounds and pathways through the requirements contracting process. It is clear that this attention has resulted in higher scores for these MSAs.

Of the eight MSAs, New York neighborhood parks rate highest for 'Immediate Environment' with an average score of 89%. (Immediate environment measures how well a park is insulated from negative impacts of its surroundings. For example, is the park next to a highway so that exhaust and debris from the road negatively impact the park user?) Overall, the average park user's experience was not negatively impacted by the park's surroundings.

Citywide Averages for Major Service Areas

Bathrooms	Drinking Fountains	Active Recreation Space	Passive Green Space	Playgrounds	Sitting Area	Pathways	Immediate Environment
48%	53%	66%	70%	80%	83%	83%	89%
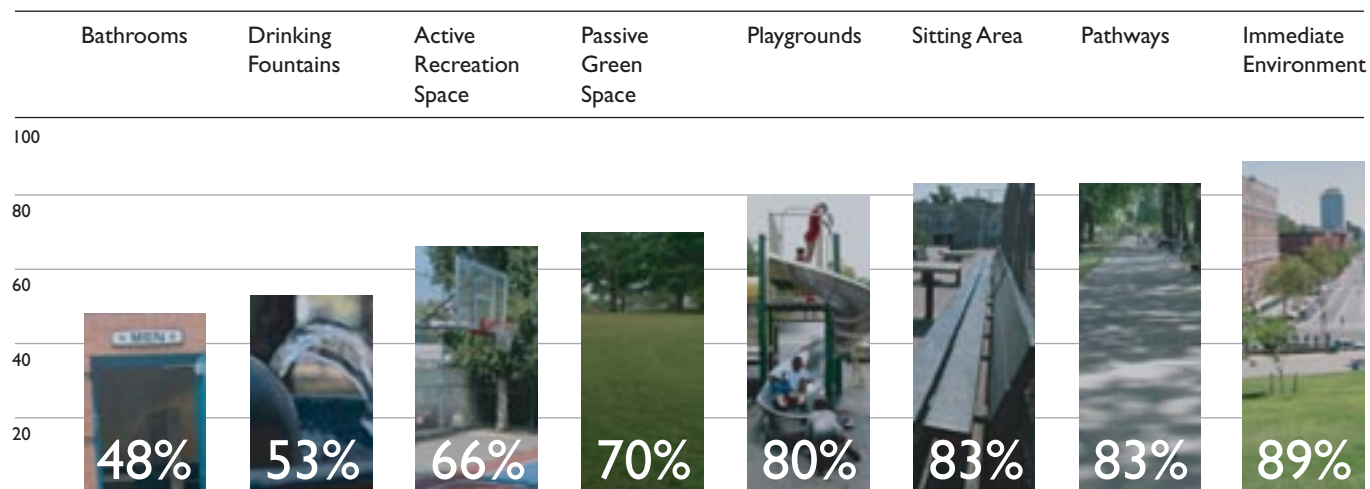
CERTAIN FEATURES OF PARKS
RATE VERY POORLY

Citywide, the average park bathroom score was 48%. In too many cases, existing bathrooms were either locked or desperately in need of maintenance or supplies.

'Drinking Fountains' were also a low-performer, scoring an average of 53% in parks citywide. Many drinking fountains did not function at all. Of those that did, many were unsafe and/or unsanitary with standing water, algae or broken glass in the basins.

Citywide the average park 'Active Recreation Space' score was 66%. Many courts and athletic fields were closed. Among those that were open, many times broken glass, litter and other unsafe conditions impeded use. This is a particularly disturbing trend because of the disproportionate use of these facilities by New York's children.

For the 69 parks that received "D" or "F" ratings, the chart below details what percentage received a failing score for each MSA. For example, 76% of the universe of "D" and "F" parks received failing grades for 'Drinking Fountains' and 75% failed for 'Bathrooms'. At least 50% of the "D" and "F" rated parks failed for 'Drinking Fountains', 'Bathrooms', 'Passive Recreation Space' and 'Active Recreation Space' individually. (Not all 69 parks failed for all four MSAs concurrently.) Targeting these particular MSAs should result in significant improvement to the conditions within neighborhood parks.

Percentage of D and F Parks Failing Major Service Areas

Immediate Environment	Pathways	Sitting Areas	Playgrounds	Passive Green Space	Active Recreation Space	Drinking Fountains	Bathrooms
19%	26%	27%	28%	51%	62%	75%	76%

Conclusions

The Report Card on Parks clearly documents areas for improved service in the neighborhood parks of New York City.

- Though there are significant numbers of parks in need, these needs can be clearly associated with defined "Major Service Areas". The Report Card has identified parks in need in every borough throughout the City and presents a concrete universe of parks and service improvements that could be made.

- As illustrated, by addressing bathrooms, drinking fountains, active recreation areas and passive recreation areas, significant improvements in overall results can be achieved.

In order to address this citywide need, New Yorkers for Parks calls for the creation of a an initiative to directly address New York City's "in need" neighborhood parks. An effort of this kind would tap public/private partnerships and funds, engage communities and develop a plan of action for site improvements.

NY4P believes that a targeted neighborhood park advocacy effort, based on the findings of the Report Card, is the most effective way to improve neighborhood parks throughout the five boroughs. This report is designed to serve as a starting point for that effort.

Find Your Park

Would you like to see how your neighborhood park fared?

This next section of the report is designed to help you find out how your local park performed in comparison to others in the city. Organized first by borough and then alphabetically, the following chart lists each park in the survey along with its corresponding grade. The final scores and grades are based on the park's performance on the Report Card for all the MSAs evaluated at that site.

The park scores are designed to provide constituents with a park-by-park evaluation so that they have access to tools that help them to advocate for their neighborhood park. Use the information in this section to talk about both what works and what doesn't in your local park. For a more detailed analysis of park scores, visit the NY4P website (www.ny4p.org) and view the Park Profiles, which provide additional information on park scores along with other socio-economic data.

Check out the following chart to see the report card grade for your neighborhood park.

Bronx
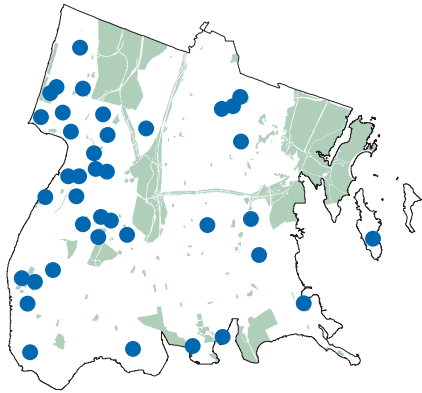
CD	Property Name	CB	Neighborhood	Acreage	Raw Score	Grade
15	A FARM IN THE BRONX	106	Tremont	2.5	49	F
13	AMBROSINI FIELD	413	City Island	3.16	95	A
14	AQUEDUCT WALK	105	University Heights	8.607	63	D
13	BICENTENNIAL VET/PARK AT WEIR CK	413	Edgewater Park	3.4	72	C-
11	BRUST PARK	108	Riverdale	1.79	69	D
13	BUFANO PLAYGROUND	412	Middletown	4.334	82	B-
18	CASTLE HILL PARK	413	Castle Hill	2.948	64	D
13	COLUCCI PLAYGROUND	412	Pelham Bay	11.5	68	D
14	DEVOE PARK	107	University Heights	5.44	48	F
12	EDENWALD PLAYGROUND	412	Edenwald	4.635	42	F
11	EWEN PARK	108	Kingsbridge	7.84	69	D
14	FORDHAM LANDING PLAYGROUND	107	University Heights	4.05	47	F
11	FORT INDEPENDENCE PLAYGROUND	108	Van Cortlandt Village	3.02	83	B
17	FRANZ SIGEL PARK	104	Concourse Village	15.99	68	D
11	HACKETT PARK	108	Fieldston	1	62	D
12	HAFFEN PARK	501	Baychester	1.28	74	C
18	HARDING PARK	411	Classon Point	2.69	62	D
11	HARRIS FIELD	107	Norwood	15.32	79	C+
11	HENRY HUDSON PARK	108	Spuyten Duyvil	8.972	85	B
11	JEROME PARK	108	Norwood	4.359	43	F
17	JOSEPH RODMAN DRAKE PARK	412	Hunts Point	2.872	52	F

CD = Council District

CB = Community Board

CD	Property Name	CB	Neighborhood	Acreage	Raw Score	Grade
17	JOYCE KILMER PARK	104	Concourse Village	6.882	73	C
13	LORETO PLAYGROUND	412	Morris Park	4.427	57	F
11	MARBLE HILL PLAYGROUND	108	Kingsbridge	1.646	84	B
16	MOTT PLAYGROUND	104	Morrisania	1.49	76	C
16/17	MULLALY PARK	104	Concourse	18.516	65	D
14	OLD FORT #4 PARK	108	Kingsbridge Heights	4.637	64	D
	PEOPLES PARK EXCHANGE	101	Mott Haven	1.044	90	A-
15	POE PARK	107	Fordham	2.331	66	D
15	QUARRY BALLFIELDS	106	East Tremont	4.7	66	D
14	RICHMAN (ECHO) PARK	105	Mount Hope	4.385	58	F
11	RIVERDALE PLAYGROUND	108	South Riverdale	2.256	73	C
11	SETON PARK	108	South Riverdale	11.689	76	C
11	SPUYTEN DUYVIL PLAYGROUND	108	South Riverdale	1.847	91	A-
15	ST. JAMES PARK	107	Fordham	11.39	65	D
12	STARS & STRIPES PLAYGROUND	412	Edenwald	8	73	C
15	TREMONT PARK	106	East Tremont	15	39	F
14	UNIVERSITY WOODS	105	University Heights	3.306	19	F
15	VIDALIA PARK	106	Bronx Park South	2.136	92	A-
11	WILLIAMSBRIDGE OVAL	107	Norwood	19.749	66	D

Ambrosini Field – Raw Score: 95, Grade: A

University Woods – Raw Score: 19, Grade: F

Brooklyn
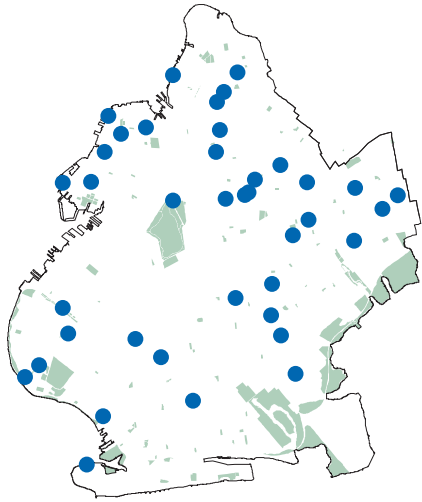
CD	Property Name	CB	Neighborhood	Acreage	Raw Score	Grade
47	BENSONHURST PARK	211	Bath Beach	17.5	58	F
42	BETSY HEAD MEMORIAL PLAYGROUND	216	Brownsville	10.555	68	D
36	BROWER PARK	208	Crown Heights	7.047	91	A-
34	CHARLIE'S PLACE	203	Bedford Stuyvesant	1.26	47	F
38	COFFEY PARK	206	Red hook	8.106	61	D
33	COLUMBUS PARK	202	Downtown Brooklyn	1.195	96	A
35	COMMODORE BARRY PARK	202	Downtown Brooklyn	10.391	80	B-
47	CONEY ISLAND CREEK PARK	213	Sea Gate	9.8	54	F
34	COOPER PARK	201	East Williamsburg	6.401	71	C-
42	CYPRUS HILLS PLAYGROUND	205	City Line	4.947	65	D
45	FOX PLAYGROUND	218	East Flatbush	2.25	74	C
44	FRIENDS FIELD	212	Ocean Parkway	6.7	50	F
36	FULTON PARK	203	Stuyvesant heights	1.987	94	A
33	GRAND FERRY PARK	201	Williamsburg / Southside	1.8	91	A
44	GRAVESEND PARK	212	Borough Park	6.379	90	A
41	HARMONY PARK	203	Weeksville	1.56	90	A
45	HARRY MAZE PLAYGROUND	217	Remsen Village	2.427	58	F
36	HERBERT VON KING PARK	203	Bedford Stuyvesant	7.819	81	B-
33	HILLSIDE PARK	202	Brooklyn Heights	2.06	94	A
46	JACOB JOFFE FIELDS	218	East Flatbush	2.984	58	F

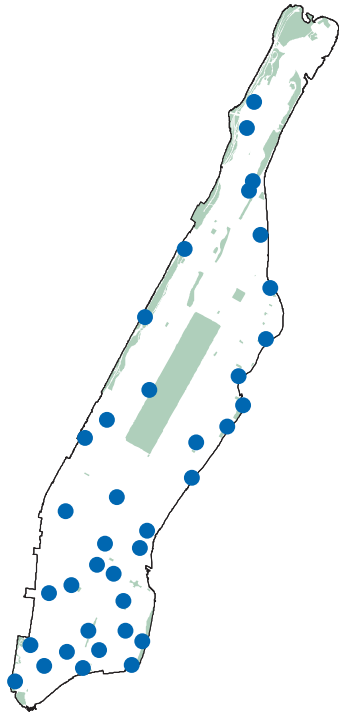| CD	Property Name	CB	Neighborhood	Acreage	Raw Score	Grade
	JOHN J. CARTY PARK	210	Bay Ridge	10	93	A
	JOHN PAUL JONES PARK	210	Bay Ridge	5.15	88	B+
43	LEIF ERICSON PARK & SQUARE	210	Bay Ridge	16.8	69	D
42	LINDEN PLAYGROUND	205	New Lots	9.332	62	D
46	LINDOWER PARK	218	Mill Basin	6.7	70	C-
38	LOUIS J. VALENTINO, JR. PARK & PLGD	206	Red Hook	2.22	85	B
34	MARTINEZ PLAYGROUND	201	East Williamsburg	2	43	F
43	MCKINLEY PARK	210	Bay Ridge	8.475	87	B+
35	MT PROSPECT PARK PLAYGROUND	208	Prospect Heights	7.79	94	A
42	NEHEMIAH PARK	216	Brownsville	1.648	56	F
45	PAERDEGAT PARK	217	East Flatbush	3.56	79	C+
37	ROBERT VENABLE (PARK) PLAYGROUND	205	City Line	4.29	49	F
41	SARATOGA SQUARE PARK	203	Ocean Hill	3.214	76	C
37	SPERANDEO BROTHERS PLAYGROUND	205	Highland Park	2.39	48	F
36	ST. JOHNS RECREATION CENTER	208	Weeksville	9.339	82	B-
34	STERNBERG PARK	201	East Williamsburg	4.044	35	F
36	THOMAS BOYLAND PARK	204	Ocean Hill	1.82	87	B+
38	VAN VOORHEES PARK	206	Cobble Hill	5.25	69	D
48	WM. E. KELLY MEMORIAL PARK	215	Ocean Parkway	3.499	79	C+

Columbus Park – Raw Score: 96, Grade: A

Sternberg Park – Raw Score: 35, Grade: F

Manhattan

CD	Property Name	CB	Neighborhood	Acreage	Raw Score	Grade
2	BARUCH PLAYGROUND	303	Lower East Side	2.32	70	C-
2	BELLEVUE SOUTH PARK	306	Kips Bay	1.593	92	A-
7	BENNETT PARK	312	Washington Heights	1.8	77	C+
3	BRYANT PARK	305	Times Square	9.603	100	A+
5	CARL SCHURZ PARK	308	Yorkville	14.938	91	A-
3	CHELSEA PARK	304	Chelsea / Midtown South	3.9	77	C+
1	CITY HALL PARK	301	City Hall	8.8	98	A+
9	COL CHARLES YOUNG PLAYGROUND	310	Harlem	6.423	55	F
1	COLEMAN PLAYGROUND	303	Chinatown / Lower East Side	2.61	37	F
1	COLUMBUS PARK	303	Chinatown	3.14	71	C-
2	CORLEARS HOOK PARK	303	Lower East Side	4.355	53	F
6	DAMROSCH PARK	307	Lincoln Square	2.443	95	A
3	DE WITT CLINTON PARK	304	Clinton	5.829	74	C
9	FREDERICK JOHNSON PARK	310	Sugar hill	2.445	76	C
2	HAMILTON FISH PARK	303	Lower East Side	4.3	94	A
8	HARLEM RIVER DRIVE PARK	311	East Harlem / Yorkville	5.756	50	F
10	J. HOOD WRIGHT PARK	312	Washington Heights	6.699	80	B-
7	JACKIE ROBINSON PARK	310	Hamilton Heights	12.772	70	C-
3	JAMES J. WALKER PARK	302	West Village	1.67	98	A+
5	JOHN JAY PARK	308	Upper East Side	3.312	79	C+

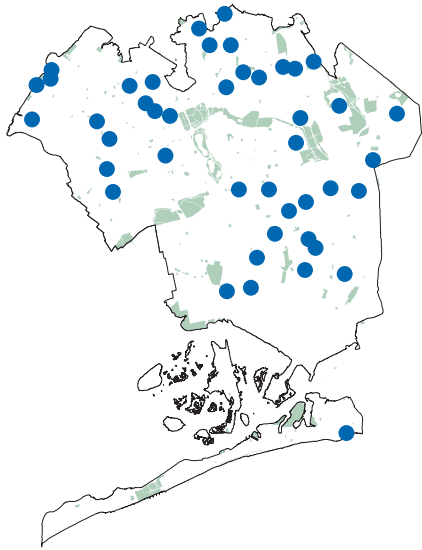| CD	Property Name	CB	Neighborhood	Acreage	Raw Score	Grade
3	MADISON SQUARE PARK	305	Flatiron	6.234	96	A
1	PUBLIC PLACE (BATTERY PARK CITY)	301	Battery Park City	1.556	97	A+
5	QUEENSBORO OVAL	308	Turtle Bay	1.239	58	F
6	RIVERSIDE PARK	314	Upper West Side	1.578	95	A
7	SAKURA PARK	314	Morningside Heights	2.067	87	B+
1	SARA D. ROOSEVELT PARK	303	Lower East Side	7.85	55	F
2	SEWARD PARK	303	Lower East Side	3.046	94	A
5	ST. CATHERINE'S PARK	308	Upper East Side	1.383	96	A
4	ST. VARTAN PARK	306	Murray Hill / Kips Bay	2.759	91	A-
4	STANLEY ISAACS COURT	308	East Harlem / Yorkville	1.227	71	C-
2	STUYVESANT SQUARE	306	Gramercy Park	3.928	97	A+
6	THEODORE ROOSEVELT PARK	307	Upper West Side	17.574	94	A
8	THOMAS JEFFERSON PARK	311	East Harlem	15.524	54	F
2	TOMPKINS SQUARE PARK	303	East Village	10.552	67	D
2	UNION SQUARE PARK	305	Gramercy Park	3.593	98	A+
1	WASHINGTON MARKET PARK	301	Tribeca	1.61	91	A-
1	WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK	302	Greenwich Village	9.749	85	B

Bryant Park – Raw Score: 100, Grade: A+

Coleman Playground – Raw Score: 37, Grade: F

Queens

CD	Property Name	CB	Neighborhood	Acreage	Raw Score	Grade
19	BAYSIDE FIELDS	501	Auburndale	4.206	64	D
26	BIG BUSH PARK	402	Woodside	2.5	69	D
19	BOWNE PARK	407	Auburndale / Whitestone	11.788	80	B
23	BREININGER PARK	501	Bellerose	2.889	84	B
	BULOVA PARK	403	Astoria	1.502	75	C
24	CAPT TILLY PARK	408	Jamaica Hills	9.16	70	C-
27	DETECTIVE KEITH L. WILLIAMS PARK	501	Hollis / Jamaica	8.114	84	B
26	DOUGHBOY PLAZA	402	Woodside	1.71	94	A
28	DR. CHARLES R. DREW MEMORIAL PARK	412	South Jamaica	6.336	67	D
21	EAST ELMHURST PLAYGROUND	403	East Elmhurst	3.827	67	D
23	FARM PLAYGROUND/PS 26	408	Fresh Meadows	3.757	67	D
20	FLUSHING FIELDS	407	Linden Hill / Whitestone	10.219	91	A-
19	FRANCIS LEWIS PARK	407	Whitestone	16.831	67	D
19	FRANK GOLDEN PARK	407	College Point	11.124	71	C-
27	HAGGERTY PARK	501	Bellaire	5.278	84	B
26	HALLETS COVE PLAYGROUND	401	Astoria	5.7	80	B-
19	HARVEY PARK	407	Whitestone	9.476	73	C
19	JOHN GOLDEN PARK	411	Bayside	17	42	F
21	LINDEN PARK	404	Corona	3.076	56	F
23	LINNAEUS PLAYGROUND	501	Oakland Gardens	2.056	79	C+
25	LOST BATTALION HALL	406	Rego Park	1.965	90	A-
24	MANTON PLAYGROUND	408	Briarwood	5.2	90	A-

CD	Property Name	CB	Neighborhood	Acreage	Raw Score	Grade
28	MARCONI PARK	502	Jamacia	6.611	44	F
	MARGARET I. CARMEN GREEN	407	Murray Hill / Kips Bay	2.074	83	B
26	MAURICE PARK	405	West Maspeth	8.899	57	F
31	MONTBELLIER PARK	503	Laurelton	6	63	D
26	MURRAY PLAYGROUND	402	Long Island City	2.524	71	C-
27	NAUTILUS PLAYGROUND	502	South Jamaica	4.465	76	C
21	NORTHERN PLAYGROUND	403	Jackson Heights	1.9	81	B-
31	O'DONOHUE PARK	414	Far Rockaway	2.479	70	C-
27	PETERS FIELD	501	Hollis	4.25	89	B+
25	PLAYGROUND NINETY XC	403	Jackson Heights	1.3	81	B-
31	POLICE OFFICER EDWARD BYRNE PARK	410	South Ozone	4.966	82	B-
19	POWELL'S COVE PARK	407	College Point	7.094	85	B
26	RAINEY PARK	401	Astoria / Ravenswood	8.09	34	F
19	RAYMOND O'CONNOR PARK	411	Bayside	5.4	61	D
29	REIFF PLAYGROUND	405	Maspeth	1.529	69	D
28	ROCHDALE PARK	412	Springfield Gardens	8.363	67	D
19	SAUL WEPRIN PLAYGROUND	411	Fresh Meadows	1.964	83	B
26	SOCRATES SCULPTURE PARK	401	Astoria / Ravenswood	1.553	92	A-
32	SOUTHERN FIELDS	410	South Ozone	10.886	22	F
27	ST. ALBANS PARK	501	Saint Albans	9.2	86	B
23	TENNEY PARK	503	Glen Oaks	2.84	80	B-
27	WAYANDA PARK	502	Bellaire	4.357	51	F

Doughboy Plaza – Raw Score: 94, Grade: A

Southern Fields – Raw Score: 22, Grade: F

Staten Island

Westerleigh Park – Raw Score: 98, Grade: A+

Ingram Wood – Raw Score: 38, Grade: F
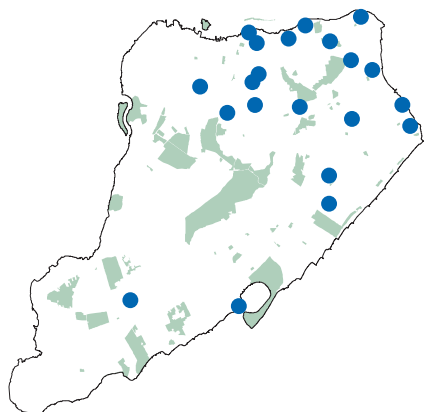
CD	Property Name	CB	Neighborhood	Acreage	Raw Score	Grade
49	ALICE AUSTEN HOUSE & PARK	501	Rosebank	14.796	90	A-
49	ALLISON PARK	110	Randall Manor	10.735	84	B
50	ANTHONY R. GAETA PARK	501	Westerleigh	1.43	73	C
	ARTHUR VON BRIESEN PARK	501	Shore Acres	13.27	98	A+
49	CLOVE'S TAIL	110	Sunnyside	3.4	86	B
49	CPL. THOMPSON PARK	411	Livingston	2.066	90	A-
49	FABER PARK	110	Port Richmond	6.1	84	B
49	HERO PARK	501	Ward Hill	3.024	96	A
51	IDA COURT	111	Annadale	1.26	73	C
50	INGRAM WOOD	501	Westerleigh	3.77	38	F
49	LUIS R. LOPEZ PARK	501	Park Hill	1.068	90	A-
50	MACARTHUR PARK	502	Dongan Hills	5.165	71	C-
50	MIDLAND FIELD	111	Midland Beach	2.16	52	F
	NORTH SHORE ESPLANADE	501	Saint George	1.521	88	B+
49	NORTHERLEIGH PARK	109	Elm Park	4.26	80	B-
	RANITEVILLE PLAYGROUND	501	Graniteville	1.6	85	B
	SEASIDE WILDLIFE NATURE PARK	110	Great Kills Harbor	1.904	96	A
49	TAPPEN PARK	501	Stapleton	1.777	58	F
49	VETERANS PARK	112	Port Richmond	3.122	85	B
49	WALKER PARK	112	Livingston	9.238	95	A
49	WESTERLEIGH PARK	110	Westerleigh	4	98	A+

Appendix A: Methodology

Survey Population

In constructing the Report Card, NY4P focused on DPR "park" properties of between one and 20 acres, as these properties represent New York City's neighborhood parks. This defined a survey population of 220 small to mid-size parks. However, several of these parks could not be included in the study. For example, NY4P did not survey those parks that were closed for capital improvement. Further, certain park properties, like skating rinks, amusement parks or forests with no user trails, have none of the Major Service Areas, or MSAs, (see list below) and were not included in this report. Thus, the final survey population consisted of 181 park properties.

Major Service Areas

NY4P chose eight MSAs based on a user-focused approach, similar to the "zone management" system utilized by the Central Park Conservancy. NY4P convened a series of four focus groups to assist with the development of the survey mechanism and the MSAs.

The first focus group consisted of 10 community leaders and elected officials who were asked to weigh the relative importance of each of these MSAs to a park users experience. Participants were asked to rate the MSAs on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being the least important to their park experience, and 5 being the most important. Participants also provided feedback on the structure and composition of the MSAs. In addition, 20 park users at Brooklyn's Prospect Park were asked to rate the relative importance of the 8 MSAs to be used in the survey. The rankings provided by the 30 respondents were then averaged and rounded to the nearest whole number to provide a final MSA relative weight figure:

FIGURE 1: MAJOR SERVICE AREAS AND RELATIVE WEIGHTS

Active Recreation Space (courts, athletic fields)	3
Passive Recreation Space (lawns, landscaped areas, gardens, lakes, natural areas and trees)	5
Playground space	5
Sitting areas	5
Bathrooms	4
Drinking fountains	3
Sidewalks, streets and pathways	3
Immediate Environment (impact on the park by its surroundings)	3

Organizational affiliations for participants in the first focus group included:
New York City Council
Department of Interior, US Forest Service, Metropolitan Initiative
Cornell Cooperative Extension, New York City
Friends of City Hall Park
Community Board members
Riverside Park Fund
Manhattan Parks and Green Space Coalition
Turnaround Friends, Inc.
Friends of Cunningham Park
Alley Pond Striders
New York Public Interest Research Group, Straphangers Campaign

Feature Forms and the Survey Instrument

NY4P staff, in cooperation with statistical consultants from the firm of Ernst & Young, LLP, then developed question forms with which to evaluate the MSAs found in each park. Individual questions were designed to measure the performance of the MSAs in each of the following categories:
1. Maintenance;
2. Cleanliness;
3. Safety; and
4. Structural Integrity.

Whenever possible, the form questions were adapted from DPR's own internal evaluation mechanism, the Parks Inspection Program (PIP).

A second focus group was then convened to provide relative weights to individual feature forms and questions on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being the least important to their park experience, and 5 being the most important. The focus group was asked to designate each of the individual form questions as 'priority' or 'routine.' Priority ratings refer to those conditions of a park feature necessary for its safe use. An 'unacceptable' rating on a 'priority' question will result in a failing score for that feature. For example, if a bathroom is locked without explanation (a 'priority' question), the park will receive a '0' for Bathrooms. Finally, the focus group rated questions tagged as routine on a scale from 1 to 5.

Organizational affiliations for participants in the second focus group included park and advocacy experts from:
Waterfront Park Coalition, New York
League of Conservation Voters
New York Public Interest Research Group
Straphangers Campaign
Friends of Van Cortlandt Park

a flowchart of relative weights of all MSAs and feature forms follows in Appendix C; the final survey instrument, along with attached relative weights, appears in Appendix D.

Calculating Raw Scores for Parks Surveyed

Each completed form was assigned a numerical grade between 0 and 100. Any park feature receiving an 'unacceptable' rating on any priority question was assigned a form grade of zero. However, in the large majority of completed forms, park features received only 'acceptable' ratings to all priority questions. In these cases, the calculation appears as follows:

Let A denote the sum of the relative weights of routine survey questions receiving 'acceptable' ratings. Let B denote the sum of the relative weights of routine survey questions receiving either 'acceptable' or 'unacceptable' ratings. Each form's final numerical score is then 100 times the quotient or A divided by B. No form score was assigned a park which lacked any given feature; in this way no park was penalized for not having any of the survey's 12 feature types.

Once each form is scored, MSA ratings were calculated. First, scored forms were grouped by MSA. Those MSAs with exactly one corresponding completed form were allotted the numerical score of that single form. Those MSAs with more than one completed form were scored according to a weighted average of the corresponding form scores, as follows: Suppose $C_1, C_2, ..., C_n$ are the n-many form scores corresponding to a given MSA. Let $D_1, D_2, ..., D_n$ be those forms' corresponding relative weights (see figure 2). MSA numerical scores were then calculated as the following quotient:

$$(C_1 * D_1 + C_2 * D_2 + ... + C_n * D_n) / (D_1 + D_2 + ... D_n)$$

No MSA rating was assigned to a park which lacked any given major service area; in this way no park was penalized for not having any of the survey's eight major service area types.

Each park's raw score was calculated in a similar fashion. Suppose E1, E2,…,Em were a park's MSA scores with corresponding weights F1, F2,…,Fm. Final raw scores were then calculated as the following quotient:

$$(E_1 * F_1 + E_2 * F_2 + ... + E_m * F_m) / (F_1 + F_2 + ... F_m)$$

Notes on Asphalt Athletic Fields

NY4P hosted a third focus group on Active Recreation Space. Organizational affiliations for participants in this focus group included:

Major League Baseball
Quebradilla Baseball Organization
Harlem RBI
Beacon Program Pathways for Youth

This group provided commentary on ideal conditions for active recreational activities and provided general feedback on active play areas, including courts, turf ballfields and asphalt ballfields, which was then integrated into the survey questions and grading system.

Additional research was performed on the incidence of injury incurred on various active play surfaces. Based on focus group results and relevant research from the field, the athletic field form scores corresponding to any asphalt ballfield surveyed were reduced by 25%.

Conversion of Raw Scores to Letter Grades

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

Organizational and professional affiliations for participants in the fourth focus group included:

Bryant Park Restoration Corporation
Private Planning and Landscape
Architecture Consultant
Trust for Public Land

FIGURE 2: CONVERSION FROM RAW SCORES TO LETTER GRADES

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

Sample Calculation – Hamilton Fish Park

Appendix E shows actual surveyor responses for Hamilton Fish Park on East Houston Street in Manhattan. Figures 3, 4 and 5, following, below include a summary of form data and the subsequent form, MSA and park score.

FIGURE 3: SUMMARY OF HAMILTON FISH FORM DATA

Form	Form Scores	Form Score Average
Playgrounds	70, 79, 90	80
Immediate Environment	100	100
Lawns and Landscaped Areas	85, 90	88
Park Trees	100	100
Sitting Areas	100, 100	100
Bathrooms	100	100
Drinking Fountains	100, 100	100
Pathways	89, 100, 100	96
Courts	72, 100	86

FIGURE 4: SUMMARY OF HAMILTON FISH MSA DATA

MSA	Calculation	MSA Score
Playgrounds	Average from figure 3	80
Immediate Environment	Single form score	100
Passive Recreation Space	(88*2 + 100*1) / 3	92
Sitting Areas	Average from figure 3	100
Bathrooms	Single form score	100
Drinking Fountains	Average from figure 3	100
Sidewalks, Streets & Paths	Average from figure 3	96
Active Recreation Space	Average from figure 3 (courts only)	86

The Hamilton Fish raw score was calculated by the weighted average of the eight MSA scores listed in figure 4.

FIGURE 5: CALCULATION OF RAW SCORE AND LETTER GRADE – HAMILTON FISH PARK

MSA	MSA Score times Weight
Playgrounds	80 * 5 = 400
Immediate Environment	100 * 3 = 300
Passive Recreation Space	92 * 5 = 460
Sitting Areas	100 * 5 = 500
Bathrooms	100 * 4 = 400
Drinking Fountains	100 * 3 = 300
Sidewalks, Streets & Paths	96 * 3 = 288
Active Recreation Space	86 * 3 = 258
Total	**2906**

This total, 2906, was then divided by the sum of the weights of the 8 MSAs. This sum is 31, so that the Hamilton Fish raw park score was then 2906/31 = 94%.

Applying this numerical score to the letter grades listed in Figure 2, it can be seen that a score of 94% corresponds to a grade of 'A'. To see a detailed list of all individual question responses submitted by surveyors of Hamilton Fish, refer to Appendix D.

Survey Work

Survey work for the Report Card took place from July 22nd to September 26th, 2002 from the hours of 10 AM to dusk, Monday through Friday. NY4P trained ten surveyors (all NY4P staff members) to complete the survey work. NY4P held three full-day training sessions during June and July of 2002 to train surveyors in the following techniques: use of the handheld computers and digital cameras, delineation of park features, use of survey forms and standards manual and procedures for documenting features with digital cameras. Each training session included the full review of a park, collection of data according to defined standards, proper photo documentation, safety procedures and procedures for storing data in the Report Card database upon completion of survey.

In the field, surveyors completed a feature form for each feature that was delineated for a given park. For example, for every drinking fountain in a park, a drinking fountain form was completed, so that in a park with three drinking fountains, a surveyor would complete three drinking fountain feature forms. Additionally, surveyors would complete a form for every playground space within natural and/or constructed boundaries, for every pair of bathrooms, for every naturally bounded lawn or landscaped area, etc.

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