

Background of the Playground Initiative

The Playground Initiative is a partnership between the San Francisco Parks Alliance (SFPA) and San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department (RPD) dedicated to ensuring all children have access to safe and engaging play areas in their own neighborhoods. SFPA works closely with RPD, neighborhood groups, and elected officials to advocate, fundraise and organize communities to improve the quality of playgrounds in the city.

The Playground Report Card is a major project of the Playground Initiative. Every two years, SFPA and RPD survey public playgrounds to determine their condition and quality. Playgrounds are graded on a scale of A-F. Using the data from the Playground Report Card, SFPA

2014 Playground Reassessment Report

The 2012 Clean and Safe Neighborhood Parks Bond

In the 2012 election, 72% of San Francisco voters passed the Clean and Safe Neighborhood Parks Bond. The bond gave the City \$195 million for capital projects such as repair and restoration of parks, recreation areas and open space. \$15.5 million was allocated for Failing Playgrounds; however, the money was not designated for specific playgrounds.

The Task Force

A task force convened by SFPA and RPD will make recommendations on which playgrounds receive the \$15.5 million funding for renovations. The Failing Playgrounds Task Force will be made up of SFPA staff, RPD staff and representatives from community organizations and city agencies. The Task Force will convene in the spring of 2014. Along with the reassessment data, the Task Force will take several other data points, such as geographic equity, youth density, and chemically treated wood, into consideration before making their recommendations. This objective consideration of factors by the Task Force members will assure that public money from the 2012 Parks Bond will be directed to sites that are most in need of renovation. In summer 2014, the Task Force will present their recommendations to the Recreation and Parks Commission in the form of a tiered ranked list.



SFPA CEO Matt O'Grady, SFPA Director of Street Parks Julia Brashares and RPD General Manager Phil Ginsburg conducting a playground reassessment.

repairs or renovations. SFPA also uses the playground data to promote volunteering in parks. Volunteers

and RPD are able to identify which playgrounds are most in need of repairs or renovations. SFPA also uses the playground data to promote volunteering in parks. Volunteers assist in playground clean-ups, re-painting chipped equipment and other tasks to boost the playgrounds' condition.

2014 Playground Reassessment Report

Methodology

In order to provide up to date information on the state of the city's most beleaguered playgrounds to the Failing Playground Task Force, SFPA & RPD conducted site surveys of playgrounds that were graded C, D, and F in the 2012 Report Card and that were not scheduled for renovation. Thirty-three sites were surveyed between October 2013 and March 2014 to see if the playground's conditions had improved, remained the same, or gone down.

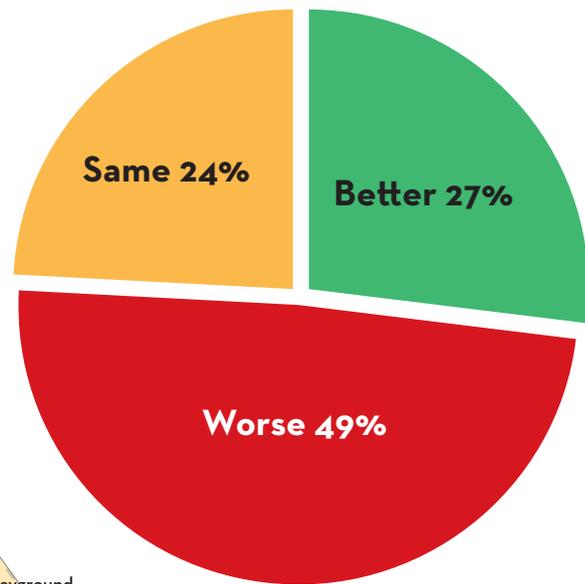


To collect data for this reassessment report, surveyors used the same process and survey instrument as they had used for the 2012 Playground Report Card to assure data consistency. The survey instrument used was first developed in 2006 by SFPA (then NPC) and RPD, and was based on the work of the National Program for Playground Safety.

The survey asks questions that are answered “yes,” “no,” or “non-applicable.” Data from the surveys is entered into a spreadsheet and converted into numerical scores, which translate into grades. Not all factors are weighted equally. For example, the question regarding missing or broken equipment is rated 1.5 points, while questions regarding signage are rated .25 of a point.



2012 to 2014 Letter Grade Change



Youngblood Coleman Playground

India Basin Shoreline Park

Handstick Park

* From July 2012 to December 2013, over 75 work orders were completed at these sites by RPD to repair hazardous broken equipment, re-paint chipped areas, remove graffiti and add missing signage.

2012 vs 2014 Grading Results Comparison

Playground	2012 Grade	2014 Grade
Alioto Mini Park*	C	B
Alioto Performing Arts Playground North*	C	C
Bernal Heights Rec Center*	C	B
Brooks Park	C	F
Brotherhood Head Mini Park	D	F
Buchanan St. Mall (Fulton)	F	F
Buchanan St. Mall (South of Turk)	C	D
Buena Vista Park	C	D
Crocker Amazon (Geneva)	C	C
Crocker Amazon (Italy)	D	F
Golden Gate Heights*	F	C
Golden Gate Park (Lincoln)	C	D
Golden Gate Park (Stow Lake/Mothers Meadow)	C	F
Grattan Playground	C	D
Herz Playground	D	D
India Basin Shoreline	C	D
Juri Commons	C	F
Lessing Sears Mini Park	C	C
Merced Heights	C	F
Miraloma Playground *	D	C
Palou & Phelps*	C	B
Panhandle Playground	C	D
Portsmouth Square	C	D
Precita Park*	F	D
Richmond Playground *	C	C
Rolph Nicol Playground	C	C
Selby & Palou Mini Park	D	D
Sergeant John Macaulay Park*	C	B
Silver Terrace Playground *	C	B
States Street Playground *	F	D
Stern Grove	F	F
West Portal Playground	D	F
Youngblood Coleman	C	C

What's Next? Looking Forward

The vital work of the Playground Task Force and its recommendations to the Recreation and Parks Commission on which playgrounds receive 2012 Parks Bond funding is just the beginning of SFPA's next phase of work to ensure all children in San Francisco have safe and engaging play spaces in their own neighborhoods.

Going forward, SFPA will continue to foster private funding for playgrounds through our Park Partner program. Among its more than 120 Park Partner groups, SFPA proudly serves as the fiscal sponsor to 17 "Friends of" playground groups, and SFPA will continue to assist these groups in building their organizational capacity so they are the most effective.

Thanks to SFPA's most recent Party for the Parks fundraiser (which benefited SFPA's Playground Initiative), \$50,000 will be directed in the coming year towards efforts to renovate the Sunset District's much-loved Larsen Playground.

This Fall, SFPA will continue its tradition of providing objective, data based, information by publishing and widely distributing a *State of San Francisco*

Playgrounds report. The report will describe and incorporate the public process and recommendations of the Failing Playground Task Force, findings from SFPA's Playground Reassessment Report, a survey of playground-design best practices, and opportunities for community investment and stewardship of neighborhood playgrounds.

And lastly, SFPA will continue to work with community members and Supervisor Mark Farrell's office on the Shared Schoolyards project, which assures that many school yards are open and unlocked on weekends, providing more accessible play spaces to the city's children. Since June 2012, the Shared Schoolyards campaign has successfully opened 24 schoolyards for weekend use. The happy by-product of this effort has been a decline in vandalism and break-ins at some sites.

Working in tandem with RPD, City officials, playground advocates and other stakeholders, SFPA will assure positive momentum to improve our city's play spaces continues.

To get involved:

For information on volunteer opportunities, email volunteer@sfparksalliance.org

For more information on the Park Partner program visit our website: sfparksalliance.org



Larsen Jet: then, and coming soon!

