



Audit of the Recreation and Park Department's Equity Measurement Tool

NIAF 24th Biennial Virtual Forum of Government Auditors

May 17, 2022



CITY & COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Controller's Office - City Services Auditor

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Introduction & Background

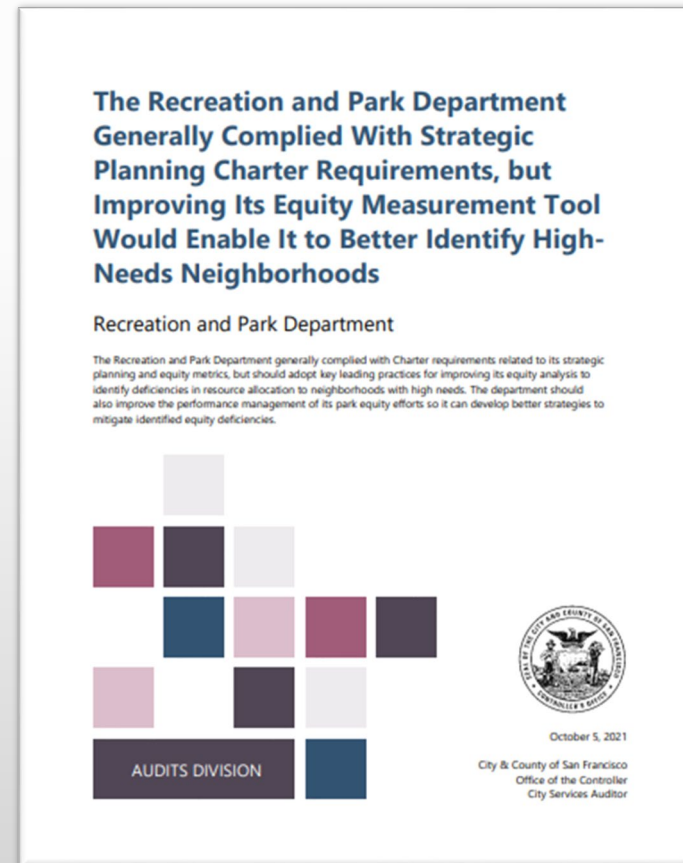
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- In June 2016, San Francisco voters approved Proposition B, which was codified in the Charter as section 16.107, mandating the Recreation and Park Department (Rec and Park) to measure and analyze services and resources available to low-income and disadvantaged communities.
- City Services Auditor (CSA Audits) was charged with evaluating compliance and assessing progress.
- [Audit](#) contained 2 findings and 3 recommendations.
- Audit Team:
 - Kate Chalk, Lead Audit Manager
 - Snehi Basnet, Audit Manager
 - Hunter Wang, Audit Manager
 - Majeedah Wesley, Staff Auditor
 - Nicholas Moore, Staff Auditor

The Recreation and Park Department Generally Complied With Strategic Planning Charter Requirements, but Improving Its Equity Measurement Tool Would Enable It to Better Identify High Needs Neighborhoods

What we will cover:

1. Who We Are
2. Objectives and Scope
3. Challenges
4. Findings
5. Contact Info



Who We Are

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Hunter Wang has worked for the Controller's Office of the City and County of San Francisco since 2018, and has been serving in his current role of audit manager since November 2020. During his time with San Francisco, Hunter has overseen various performance audits of city departments, such as assessing the staffing of the Sheriff's Department and the Municipal Transportation Agency's development of its capital programs.

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Majeedah Wesley is a staff auditor, serving in various capacities within CSA Audits. In addition to working on performance and compliance audits, she also works on investigations, and serves as the Racial Equity Lead tackling the City's Racial Equity Ordinance. Majeedah joined the San Francisco Controller's Office in 2019 when she was placed in the department as a result of The San Francisco Fellows Program, a prestigious local government post-graduate fellowship.

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Objectives & Scope

Objectives

1. Determine whether Rec and Park complied with the planning and reporting requirements in the Charter, Section 16.107.
2. Assess Rec and Park's progress in developing its equity analysis and strategies to mitigate identified deficiencies.

Scope

The scope of the audit includes Rec and Park's development and analysis of its equity metrics and its strategic, operational, and capital expenditure plans during fiscal years 2016-17 through 2019-20.

Methodology

- Reviewed relevant city law and Rec and Park documents.
- Identified and reviewed best practices from other jurisdictions, state and national park associations, and public policy institutes.
- Analyzed Rec and Park's equity metrics and strategy development against best practices.

Legal Matters

- The city law mandating this audit allowed the Board of Supervisors to withhold 5 percent of Rec and Park's budget if the department was found non-compliant with the legal requirements.
- This complicated the working relationship between the audit team and the department throughout the course of the audit.

Political Sensitivity

- The audit commenced during a time of heightened calls for government entities to address racial and other inequities, contributing to increased sensitivity around this project.
- These heightened calls also contributed to the creation of the City's racial equity ordinance, which will provide more equity criteria in coming years.

Equity Metrics

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- To identify disadvantaged communities in San Francisco, Rec and Park used Cal EPA's California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool with local customizations.
- The department designated the "equity zone" as those census tracts representing the 20 percent of residents who were most disadvantaged.
- Rec and Park developed 21 equity metrics across 7 categories.

Exhibit 2: Rec and Park measures several equity metrics for the equity zone, non-equity zone, and City as a whole.

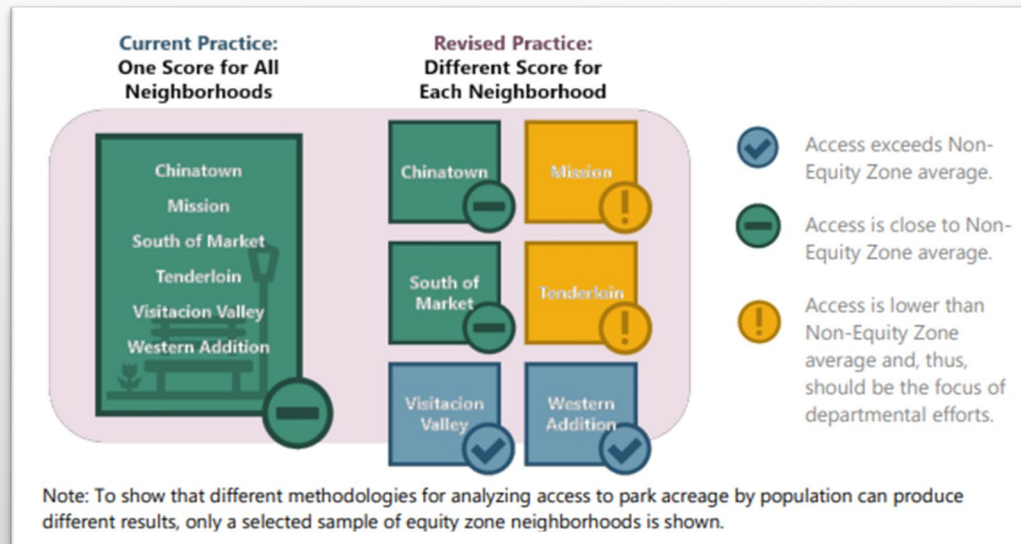
EQUITY METRICS WITH FY19 DATA				
DEMOGRAPHICS		Equity Zone	Non-Equity Zone	City as a Whole
	Population	178,000	712,000	890,000
	% of Population	20%	80%	100%
METRICS				
PARK ACCESS	Number of Parks	89	130	219
	% of Parks	41%	59%	100%
	Number of Parks / 1,000 People	.5	.18	.25
	Park Acreage	671	2,603	3,274
	% of Park Acreage	20%	80%	100%
	Acres of Park / 1,000 People	3.8	3.7	3.7
SAFETY	SFPD Incidents within 500' of Parks / 1,000 People	30,508	22,668	53,176
	% of Incidents within 500' of Parks	57%	43%	100%
MAINTENANCE	Park Evaluation Scores	91%	92%	92%
	Maintenance and Repair Requests Completed	91%	91%	91%
INVESTMENT	Capital Investment / 1,000 People	\$161,251	\$33,032	\$58,675
	% of Capital Investment	55%	45%	100%
VOLUNTEERS	Recreation Volunteers Hours / 1,000 People	130	61	75
	Park Volunteers Hours / Acre	19	35	32
	% of Total Volunteer Hours	28%	72%	100%
RECREATION	Hours of Recreational Resources / 1,000 People	894	343	1,237
	% of Recreational Resources	72%	28%	100%
	Scholarships Granted / 1,000 People	4.7	.6	1.4
	% of Scholarships	66%	34%	100%
KIDS & NATURE	Outdoor Recreation Registrants 18 and Under	743	2,407	3,150
	% of Outdoor Recreation Registrants 18 and Under	24%	76%	100%

Note: According to Rec and Park, the figures for the Safety metric "SFPD Incidents within 500' of Parks/1,000 People" should have been divided by 1000.

Source: Rec and Park 2020-2024 Update to the Strategic Plan

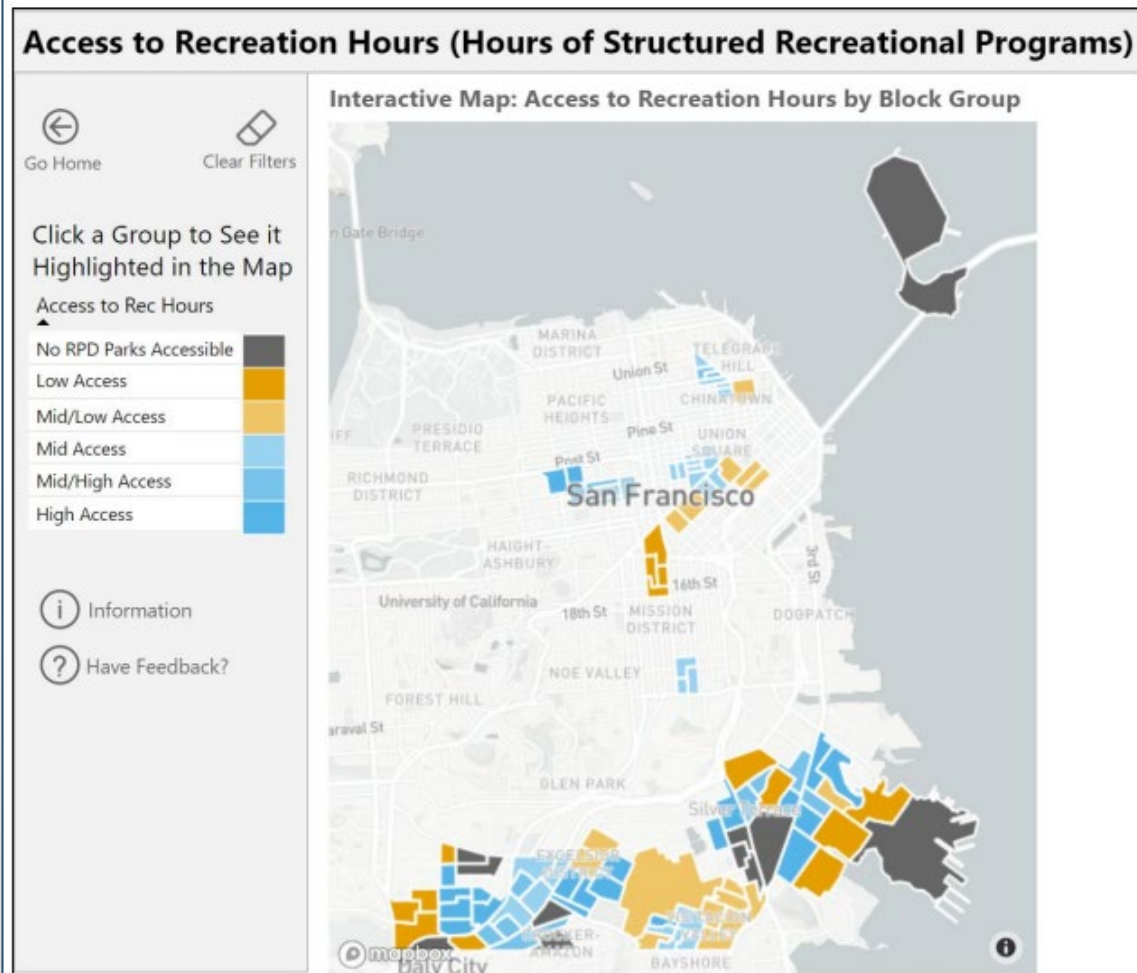
Rec and Park's equity metrics may miss deficiencies within the equity zone.

- The department's use of a single equity zone for all metrics obscures differences in resource access among low-income and disadvantaged neighborhoods.
- For example, different neighborhoods within the equity zone, such as those in the Mission and Chinatown, may have different levels of need for different categories.



According to best practices on park and open space equity measurement, **data for park metrics should be gathered and assessed at the neighborhood level** to determine the specific needs of each neighborhood.

Exhibit 4: City Performance's equity analysis dashboard for Rec and Park measures the access to recreation hours of census block groups in the equity zone.



Note: The exhibit's legend categorizes access scores for equity zone census block groups relative to each other, not compared to other parts of the City or to any specific standard of access.

Source: Equity analysis dashboard created by City Performance for Rec and Park

Rec and Park's process for managing its park equity performance does not facilitate data-driven decisions.

- Rec and Park's process for managing its park equity performance lacks key elements recommended by best practices, preventing the department from using a data-driven process to make decisions that could result in more equitable outcomes.
- The department does not or only partly incorporates four key elements of performance management as recommended by the National Performance Management Advisory Commission.

Exhibit 6: Rec and Park's equity performance management process does not incorporate or only partly incorporates key leading practices.

Performance Management Element Recommended by Best Practices	Definition	Does Rec and Park Incorporate Element?
Outcome-Oriented	Measurement should focus on the desired results achieved for the public.	⊖
Specific Targets	Progress toward outcomes is measured through the setting of quantifiable goals.	⊗
Data-Driven Analysis and Decision Making	Data resulting from measurement is analyzed and used to inform new strategies.	⊖
Continuous Improvement and Re-Evaluation	Metrics and targets are re-assessed for effectiveness every cycle.	⊖



Fully incorporated



Partially incorporated



Has not incorporated

Source: CSA analysis of Rec and Park 2019-2023 Strategic Plan; Rec and Park strategic planning documents; National Performance Management Advisory Commission, *A Performance Management Framework for State and Local Government: From Measurement and Reporting to Management and Improving*, 2010

Rec and Park complied with most Charter requirements related to its strategic planning and equity metrics and analysis.

- The department generally complied with the Charter requirements related to its strategic plan and equity metrics.
- However, Rec and Park could not provide documentation showing it submitted its equity metrics and accompanying planning documents to the Mayor for review and comment by the deadline established in city law.
- Because of the clause allowing the Board of Supervisors to withhold 5 percent of the department's baseline funding, demonstrating compliance with all legal requirements was more critical than usual.

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