

# PARK MAINTENANCE STANDARDS – HIGHER LEVEL STANDARDS

City of San José

Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services

2025

Building Community Through Fun

# Park Maintenance Standards

## 1.0 Introduction

The responsibility for the City of San José park system lies with the Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services (PRNS). The Parks Division of PRNS maintains and operates the park system, connecting people to healthy lifestyles and nature, offering equitable access to public life, and contributing to San José's identity with unique destinations and events. Parks and trails are maintained by park maintenance employees and contractors working seven days per week.

## 2.0 Parks Maintenance

Reference 3.1 provides the current parks maintenance standards or requirements employed by parks maintenance personnel in performing their daily work. It specifies minimum workmanship requirements. These standards are also employed in the annual Parks Condition Assessment (PCA) and for periodic inspection of park sites. This covers maintenance items only for park sites. Capital features are covered in other documents. This document provides ideal standards much higher than provided in reference 3.1. The Department is not resourced to meet these higher standards, which are more reflective of the community's expectations.

## 3.0 References

- 3.1 GP-0001, Park Maintenance Standards, current revision.

## 4.0 Definitions

- 4.1 Debris: limbs, rocks and various natural and/or organic materials. Leaves are excluded.
- 4.2 Developed unirrigated land: these are park areas which are not irrigated such as a large tree grove, or wood chipped or clear skinned areas of park with no irrigation. Wood chipped, or clear areas of park land were previously designed for a specific purpose. However, over the years of wear and tear elements have been removed and the areas no longer function as designed and are kept clear or wood chipped to prevent weeds.
- 4.3 Drainage: capability of planted areas to drain water from irrigation and/or rain.
- 4.4 Graffiti: writing or drawings made on a wall or other surface, without permission, within public view.
- 4.5 Landscaped or ornamental beds: these are planted areas which are irrigated.
- 4.6 Litter: examples include cigarette butts, tissue paper, food wrappings, newspapers, and larger items like abandoned appliances or grocery shopping carts.
- 4.7 Park Concerns reporting: Park concerns can be communicated to the hotline at (408) 793-5510 or by the mobile phone application.
- 4.8 Hazardous Litter: hypodermic needles, condoms, broken glass, and/or feces.

## 5.0 Policies Across Park Site Features

- 5.1 Health and Safety: all features within all park sites shall be safe at all times. Any unsafe condition observed by city staff or other people shall be reported by using the park concerns reporting system, see section 4.7, above.
- 5.2 Hazardous Litter: unacceptable at any site, any feature, anytime. Observation of such means that the cleanliness attribute of that feature is not in compliance of this maintenance standard.
- 5.3 Graffiti: PRNS has a "no tolerance of graffiti" policy. Areas surrounding parks shall be 100% free of graffiti. If graffiti is observed, it must be reported to the parks concerns report system, see section 4.7 above, to be abated within 24-48 hours. Skate park surfaces such as bowls and ramps have a variance to the graffiti policy as long as it is not offensive.

- 5.4 Drainage: No standing water or puddles are allowed from the use of reclaimed water systems at all times.
- 5.5 Signs shall be secured by appropriate fasteners and shall be rust free in every case.
- 5.6 Safety: PRNS operates a “safety first” policy. When an unsafe condition is observed by anyone, then PRNS shall be notified, see 4.7 above. PRNS shall make correction of unsafe conditions the highest priority.

## 6.0 Detailed Standards

The standards are provided for each attribute of each park feature as shown in each section below.

### 6.1 Athletic Courts

- 6.1.1 Cleanliness: Courts surfaces are free of litter and debris. The standard allows for no more than five pieces of litter or debris visible per court. Unsafe litter is not acceptable.
- 6.1.2 Drainage: 95% of observed court surface is free of standing water two days after rain or two hours after irrigation.
- 6.1.3 Fencing/Gates: 95% of fencing/gates are functional, free of protrusions, and free of holes/passages along the base. Gates open/close and latch as designed.
- 6.1.4 Functionality of Structures: 95% of available sport-related and support structures are operational for playing or observing sports. Examples of sport-related and support structures include backstops, goal posts, dugouts, team benches, bleachers, nets, wind screens etc.
- 6.1.5 Graffiti: Outdoor athletic courts and their sport-related and support structures are 100% free of graffiti.
- 6.1.6 Weeds: No weeds allowed in hardscape court surfaces. For non-hardscape courts or play areas, no weeds allowed in the active play or scoring areas and no more than 5% weeds allowed elsewhere within the court.

### 6.2 Athletic Fields

- 6.2.1 Cleanliness: Turf athletic fields are free of litter and debris. The standard allows for no more than five pieces of litter or debris visible in a 100' by 100' area. Unsafe litter is not acceptable.
- 6.2.2 Weeds: Weed levels are below 5% of total turf area.
- 6.2.3 Color: 95% of turf athletic fields are uniformly green. Do not rate Artificial Turf for color.
- 6.2.4 Density: 95% of turf area is free of bare spots.
- 6.2.5 Drainage: Turf athletic field is 95% free of standing water two days after rain or two hours after irrigation.
- 6.2.6 Fencing/Gates: 95% of fencing is functional, free of protrusions, and free of holes/passages along the base. Gates open/close and latch as designed.
- 6.2.7 Functionality of Structures: 95% of available sport-related and support structures are operational for playing or observing sports. Examples of sport-related and support structures include backstops, goal posts, dugouts, team benches, spectator stands, and lighting system. This standard focuses on functionality, not attractiveness of structures.
- 6.2.8 Graffiti: Turf athletic fields and their sport-related and support structures are 100% free of graffiti.
- 6.2.9 Mowing: Turf is mowed and kept at a uniform height of less than ankle height 3.5"-4". Do not rate artificial turf for mowing.
- 6.2.10 Surface Quality: Infield is 95% smooth, playable and without holes
- 6.2.11 Holes and Pests: Noticeable from a ten (10) feet distance, turf is free of visible holes greater than two to three inches in diameter and/or depth.

### 6.3 Benches, Tables, & BBQs

- 6.3.1 Cleanliness: Available tables are free of litter, dirt, stains, and rust. 95% of available BBQs are free of litter, dirt, ash, coals and rust. Immediate areas surrounding 95% of all benches, tables, and grills are free of litter, weeds, debris, ash and coals. The standard allows for no more than five pieces of litter or debris present in a surrounding area. Debris include limbs, rocks, ash and coals. Unsafe litter is not acceptable.
- 6.3.2 Graffiti: Benches, tables, and BBQs are 100% free of graffiti.
- 6.3.3 Paint/Aesthetics: 95% of surface of all benches and tables appears free of peeling, cracked/chipped surfaces and exposed Rebar.

### 6.4 Bike Parks

- 6.4.1 Cleanliness: Bike Park is free of litter and debris. The standard allows for no more than five pieces of litter or debris, lightly scattered, are visible in 25' by 25' area or along a 100' line. Debris include limbs, rocks and any other items that impedes use of area. Leaves are excluded. Unsafe litter is not acceptable.
- 6.4.2 Graffiti: 100% free of graffiti.
- 6.4.3 Weeds: Weed levels are below 5% of total park area.
- 6.4.4 Concrete Surface Quality: Bike Park surface is 95% smooth and level - free of holes, cracks, chipping and deteriorating concrete.
- 6.4.5 Dirt or Decomposed Granite Surface Quality: Bike Park surface is 95% smooth and level- free of holes, low spots, bicycle wheels depressions, large areas of erosion due to water runoff.
- 6.4.6 Fencing/Gates: 95% of fencing/gates are functional, free of protrusions, and free of holes/passages along the base. Gates open/close and latch as designed.
- 6.4.7 Signage: 95% of signs are legible, free of graffiti, and properly installed in noticeable locations. Note: Availability, language, and purpose of signage are not assessed.\*\*
- 6.4.8 Drainage: Bike Park is free of standing water two days after rain or two hours after irrigation. Standard applies all year.

### 6.5 Developed Unirrigated Land

- 6.5.1 Cleanliness: Developed land areas are free of litter and debris. The standard allows for no more than five pieces of litter or debris visible in a 10' by 10' area or along a 100' line. Natural leaf litter is acceptable. Unsafe litter is not acceptable.
- 6.5.2 Plant Health: 95% or more of each of shrubs and ground cover show no signs of death or damage (e.g., broken or uprooted) and are the correct shape for the variety.\* Trees are covered separately (section 6.16).
- 6.5.3 Pruning: 95% of shrubs and ground covers have appropriate size and shape for their location. Note: The size and shape should be common to species and should not impede pathway nor block sight lines and landmarks, unless they are deliberately designated barriers. Trees are covered separately (section 6.16).
- 6.5.4 Holes and Pests: Noticeable from a ten (10) foot distance, bed is free of visible holes greater than 2-3 inches in diameter and/or depth. Note: Holes greater than 2-3 inches (in diameter and/or depth) that are observed during the inspection process should be reported so they can be filled. The standard is not met if multiple holes and/or mounds caused by any animal (e.g., gophers, moles) are aesthetically unpleasant and/or impede park users from walking or jogging, even if holes are less than 2-3 inches in diameter and/or depth.
- 6.5.5 Weeds: 95% or more of developed land is free of weeds and 100% free of vines overtaking area.

## 6.6 Dog Parks

- 6.6.1 Cleanliness: Dog play area is free of litter, debris and feces. The standard allows for no more than five pieces of litter or debris or feces visible per dog play area. Unsafe litter is not acceptable.
- 6.6.2 Odor: Dog play area is free of strong urine or feces odor from a ten (10) foot distance.
- 6.6.3 Graffiti: Play area and its equipment are 100% free of graffiti.
- 6.6.4 Drinking Fountains in Dog Parks
  - 6.6.4.1 100% of drinking fountains are 95% accessible, operational with appropriate water flow (enough flow to drink from and flow does not overshoot bowl), bowl drains, no leaks and free of standing water.
  - 6.6.4.2 95% of drinking fountains are 95% free of garbage, sand or organic material. Fountain should look presentable and sanitary for use. 100% of drinking fountains are 100% are free of graffiti.
  - 6.6.4.3 95% of drinking fountains are 95% free of rust and stains.
- 6.6.5 Surface Quality: Surface quality of decomposed granite, dirt or wood chip is 95% reasonably smooth, usable and without significant holes. Do not rate artificial turf.
- 6.6.6 Signage: Signs are legible, free of graffiti, and properly installed near entrances. Standardized signage is in place.\*\*
- 6.6.7 Fencing/Gates: 95% of fencing/gates are functional, free of protrusions, and free of holes/passages along the base. Gates open/close and latch as designed.

## 6.7 Drinking Fountains

- 6.7.1 Integrity of Equipment: 95% of drinking fountains are 95% accessible, operational with appropriate water flow (enough flow to drink from and flow does not overshoot the bowl), bowl drains, no leaks, and free of standing water.
- 6.7.2 Cleanliness: 95% of drinking fountains are 95% free of garbage, sand, stains, or organic material. Fountains should be presentable and sanitary for use.
- 6.7.3 Graffiti: 100% of drinking fountains are 100% free of graffiti.
- 6.7.4 Paint/Aesthetics: 95% of drinking fountains are 95% rust free.

## 6.8 Exercise Stations/Par-courses

- 6.8.1 Cleanliness: Exercise equipment is free of litter, dirt, stains, and rust. Immediate areas surrounding 95% of all equipment is free of litter, weeds and debris. The standard allows for no more than five pieces of litter or debris present in a surrounding area. Unsafe litter is not acceptable.
- 6.8.2 Graffiti: Exercise equipment is 100% free of graffiti.
- 6.8.3 Drainage: Exercise area is free of standing water two days after rain or two hours after irrigation.
- 6.8.4 Functionality of Exercise Structures and Equipment: 95% of equipment and surfaces are functional and safe structures.
- 6.8.5 Integrity of Equipment: 95% of equipment is free of deterioration, such as rust, rot, splinters, or dents, and 100% is free of sharp edges and protrusions. 100% of attachments (e.g., bolts and screws) are secure.
- 6.8.6 Paint/Aesthetics: 95% of surface of all equipment appears free of peeling, cracked or chipped paint or other finishes.

- 6.8.7 Signage: 95% of signs are legible, free of graffiti, and properly installed in noticeable locations. Availability, language, and purpose of signage are not assessed.\*\*
- 6.8.8 Surface Quality: Surface quality of decomposed granite, dirt or wood chip is 95% reasonably smooth, usable and without significant holes.

#### 6.9 Hardscape

- 6.9.1 Cleanliness: Hardscapes are free of litter and debris. The surface of circulation areas adjacent to play areas is free of playground sand/Fibar, where applicable. The standards are met only if all the following three conditions are met: (1) no more than five pieces of litter in any 25' by 25' area or along a 100' line; (2) no debris that obstructs passage. (3) Unsafe litter is not acceptable.
- 6.9.2 Drainage: 95% of observed hardscape area is free of standing water two days after rain or two hours after irrigation
- 6.9.3 Weeds: 95% of paved surfaces are free of weeds. Note: This standard does not refer to edging or grass growth over adjoining hardscape. Edging is addressed under turf (standard 6.17.6). Decomposed granite paths are 95% weed and vegetation free.
- 6.9.4 Graffiti: Hardscape area is 100% free of graffiti.
- 6.9.5 Holes and Pests: Decomposed granite paths are 95% smooth and level- free of holes, low spots, bicycle wheels depressions, large areas of erosion due to water runoff. Noticeable from a ten (10) foot distance, hardscape is free of visible holes greater than 2-3 inches in diameter and/or depth. The standard is not met if multiple holes and/or mounds caused by any animal (e.g., gophers, moles) are aesthetically unpleasant and/or impede park users from walking or jogging, even if holes are less than 2-3 inches in diameter and/or depth.
- 6.9.6 Surface Quality: Decomposed Granite material is compacted and not loose and at adequate level to mow band, sidewalk or bender board. Thresholds between surface types and surface elevations changes are no greater than 0.5 inch.

#### 6.10 Ornamental or Landscaped Beds

- 6.10.1 Cleanliness: Ornamental or landscaped gardens, shrubs, and ground covers are free of litter and debris. The standard allows for no more than five pieces of litter or debris visible in a 10' by 10' area or along a 100' line. Natural leaf litter is acceptable. Unsafe litter is not acceptable.
- 6.10.2 Plant Health: 95% or more of each ornamental or landscaped gardens, shrubs, and ground cover show no signs of death or damage (e.g., broken or uprooted) and are the correct shape for the variety.\*
- 6.10.3 Pruning: 95% of ornamental gardens, shrubs, and ground covers have appropriate size and shape for their location. Note: The size and shape should be common to species and should not impede pathway nor block sight lines and landmarks, unless they are deliberately designated barriers.
- 6.10.4 Holes and Pests: Noticeable from a ten (10) foot distance, bed is free of visible holes greater than 2-3 inches in diameter and/or depth. Note: Holes greater than 2-3 inches (in diameter and/or depth) that are observed during the inspection process should be reported so they can be filled. The standard is not met if multiple holes and/or mounds caused by any animal (e.g., gophers, moles) are aesthetically unpleasant and/or impede park users from walking or jogging, even if holes are less than 2-3 inches in diameter and/or depth.
- 6.10.5 Weeds: 95% or more of each ornamental gardens, shrubs, and ground covers is free of weeds and 95% free of vines overtaking area.

6.10.6 Drainage: 95% of bed area is free of standing water two days after rain or two hours after irrigation.

#### 6.11 Parking Lots

6.11.1 Cleanliness: Parking Lots and roads are free of litter and debris. The standard allows for no more than five pieces of litter or debris visible in 25' by 25' area or along a 100' line. Examples of Debris include limbs, rocks and any other items that impede use of area. Leaves are excluded. Unsafe litter is not acceptable. 95% or more of each planted island area is free of weeds.

6.11.2 Curbs: When present, 95% of curbs in parking lots and roads are intact. This standard mostly applies to asphalt curbs (a.k.a. berms) in regional parks, but if present in other parks, this standard applies.

6.11.3 Drainage: Parking lots and roads are free of standing water two days after rain or two hours after irrigation.

6.11.4 Graffiti: Parking lots and roads are 100% free of graffiti.

6.11.5 Signage: Signs are legible, free of graffiti, and properly installed in noticeable locations. Examples of signs include directional signs.\*\*

#### 6.12 Playgrounds

6.12.1 Cleanliness: Children's Play Area is free of litter and debris. The standard allows for no more than five pieces of litter or debris visible per play area. Play area pathways resilient surfaces are 95% free of sand, wood chip and leaves. Unsafe litter is not acceptable.

6.12.2 Graffiti: Play area and its equipment are 100% free of graffiti.

6.12.3 Drainage: Play Area is free of standing water two days after rain or two hours after irrigation.

6.12.4 Fencing/Gates: 95% of fencing/gates are functional, free of protrusions, and free of holes/passages along the base. Gates open/close and latch as designed.

6.12.5 Functionality of Play Structures and Equipment: 100% of equipment and play surfaces are functional and safe structures.

6.12.6 Integrity of Equipment: 100% of play equipment is free of deterioration, such as rust, rot, splinters, dents, and 100% is free of sharp edges and protrusions. 100% of attachments (e.g., bolts and screws) are secure.

6.12.7 Surface Quality: If applicable, Fibar/sand is loose (not compacted), and the level is at least 12 inches in depth or at or above indicated level. Surface is 95% free of cracks and holes that present a trip hazard.

6.12.8 Weeds: no weeds allowed in the play area.

#### 6.13 Restrooms

6.13.1 Cleanliness: Entryway and interior of restrooms are free of litter, debris, and feces. Waste receptacles are clean and not overflowing when applicable. The standard allows for no more than five pieces of litter, debris on the floor, wall or ceiling of restroom. The standard is not met if broken glass, feces or needles are present in or around restrooms.

6.13.2 Graffiti: Interiors of restrooms are 95% free of graffiti.

6.13.3 Functionality of Structures: 95% of toilets, urinals, partitions, stall walls and doors, diaper-changing stations, water faucets, and sink drains are operational and free of leaks and rust, where applicable.

6.13.4 Drainage: No standing water or puddles at all times. Floor drains are free of obstructions.

6.13.5 Lighting: 95% of lights are operational and unobstructed, where applicable.

- 6.13.6 Odor: Restroom is free of offensive odor.
  - 6.13.7 Signage: Restroom signs are legible, free of graffiti, and properly installed near entrances.\*\*
  - 6.13.8 Supplies: Restrooms are stocked with toilet paper, paper towels, and soap.
- 6.14 Skate Parks
- 6.14.1 Cleanliness: Skate Park is free of litter and debris. Note: The standard allows for no more than five pieces of litter or debris visible in a 25' by 25' area or along a 100' line. Debris include limbs, rocks and any other items that impedes use of area. Unsafe litter is not acceptable.
  - 6.14.2 Graffiti: Areas surrounding park are 100% free of graffiti. Skate park surfaces such as bowls and ramps have a variance to the graffiti policy as long as the graffiti is not offensive.
  - 6.14.3 Weeds: Weed levels are below 5% of total park area.
  - 6.14.4 Surface Quality: Skate Park surface is 95% smooth and level, free of holes, low spots, bicycle wheels depressions, large areas of erosion due to water runoff, deteriorating concrete and chipping and cracking.
  - 6.14.5 Fencing/Gates: 95% of fencing/gates are functional, free of protrusions, and free of holes/passages along the base. Gates open/close and latch as designed.
  - 6.14.6 Signage: Signs are legible, free of graffiti, and properly installed in noticeable locations. Availability, language, and purpose of signage are not assessed.\*\*
  - 6.14.7 Drainage: Skate Park is free of standing water two days after rain or two hours after irrigation. Standard applies all year.
- 6.15 Trees
- 6.15.1 Limbs: No broken or hanging limbs greater than one (1) inch in diameter are visible or impede passage to pedestrians and are not encroaching on any equipment (e.g., playgrounds, shade structures). 95% of trees shall have a minimum four (4) foot clearance above playgrounds.
  - 6.15.2 Pruning: 95% of trees shall have minimum eight (8) foot clearance above footpaths and turf and minimum fourteen (14) foot clearance above streets and are not encroaching on any equipment (e.g., playgrounds, shade structures). 95% of trees shall have a minimum four (4) foot clearance above playgrounds.
  - 6.15.3 Plant Health: All trees are alive and 95% of trees are free of damage (e.g., dead limbs, brown foliage, damaged bark).
  - 6.15.4 Vines: Vines in trees do not exceed two feet in height from base of tree and are not in tree canopy.
  - 6.15.5 Tree Basins: Tree basin shall be at minimum of 24 inches from base of tree. The basin shall be kept 95% weed and grass free.
  - 6.15.6 Tree Suckers: Suckers at base of tree do not exceed 18 inches in height.
- 6.16 Turf (natural turf only)
- 6.16.1 Cleanliness: Turf is free of litter. The standard allows for no more than five pieces of trash per acre. Turf is free of organic debris that impedes mowing. The standard allows for no more than five pieces of debris per acre. Unsafe litter is not acceptable.
  - 6.16.2 Color: 95% of turf area is green.
  - 6.16.3 Weeds: Weed levels are below 5% of total turf area.
  - 6.16.4 Density: 95% of turf area is free of bare spots.

- 6.16.5 Drainage: 95% of turf area is free of standing water two days after rain or two hours after irrigation.
- 6.16.6 Edging: 95% of edges are clearly defined and have less than six (6) inches of growth over adjoining landscape.
- 6.16.7 Mowing: Turf is mowed and kept at a uniform height of less than ankle height or 4.5-5 inches.
- 6.16.8 Holes and Pests: Noticeable from a ten (10) foot distance, turf is free of visible holes greater than 2-3 inches in diameter and/or depth. Note: Holes greater than 2-3 inches (in diameter and/or depth) that are observed during the inspection process should be reported so they can be filled. The standard is not met if multiple holes and/or mounds caused by any animal (e.g., gophers, moles) impede park users from walking or jogging, even if holes are less than 2-3 inches in diameter and/or depth.
  
- 6.17 Undeveloped areas within Park land
  - 6.17.1 Cleanliness: Open space is free of unsafe-litter.
  - 6.17.2 Tree Pruning: Trees shall have minimum eight (8) foot clearance above footpath and turf and minimum fourteen (14) foot clearance above street.
  
- 6.18 Waste Receptacles:
  - 6.18.1 Cleanliness: 95% of all exteriors of receptacles are clean of food waste, spills or other leftover waste items. Immediate areas surrounding 95% of all waste receptacles are free of litter and debris. Trash is not overflowing in waste receptacles. The standard allows for no more than five pieces of litter or debris present in the immediate area surrounding any waste receptacle. Unsafe litter is not acceptable.
  - 6.18.2 Graffiti: 95% free of graffiti.
  - 6.18.3 Painting /Aesthetics: Paint is uniform color, paint quality, not peeling, not chipping where applicable, on 95% of all receptacles. 95% are rust free. 95% are dent free.
  
- 6.19 Water Management
  - 6.19.1 Integrity of Equipment: 100% leak free at all backflows and irrigation systems. 100% leak free and/or no evidence of irrigation system failures such as large puddles in turf, large soggy areas, evidence of water geysers.

\*Plant shape varieties TBA

\*\* Standardized signage package for dog parks, restrooms, parking lot and etc. is TBA

Amenity types to consider for the second iteration of ideal standards:

Green Stormwater Infrastructure

Lakes and ponds

Overhead structures

Miscellaneous buildings

Trails

REV	REASON AND DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE	APPROVALS	ORIGINATOR	RELEASE DATE
-	Initial release	Avi Yotam Jon Cicirelli	D. Greeley	April 2021
	Remove 6.10, update 6.8.1, 6.11.1, 6.15.1, 6.15.2, 6.16.6, 6.17.1, & 6.18.1		C. Cioni	August 2023
	Higher level standards		C. Cioni	March 2025