

Performance Audit

**DEPARTMENT of PUBLIC WORKS  
PARKS MAINTENANCE**

Report by the  
Office of City Controller

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To the Honorables: Pittsburgh Mayor Luke Ravenstahl  
and Members of Pittsburgh City Council:

The Office of City Controller is pleased to present this performance audit of *Department of Public Works Parks Maintenance* conducted pursuant to the Controller's powers under Section 404(c) of the Pittsburgh Home Rule Charter.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City has over 2892 acres of park land comprised of four large Regional Parks (Frick, Schenley, Highland and Riverview) and numerous smaller parks and parklets. Park facilities and grounds are maintained by the Department of Parks Maintenance Division which is organized into seven geographic divisions. This audit assesses day to day park maintenance, compliance with departmental maintenance procedures and schedules and performance reporting.

## Findings and Recommendations

### Compliance with Maintenance Standards and Frequency Schedules

**Finding:** The Bureau's maintenance standards and frequency schedules are more akin to guides than rigid schedules. Division supervisors stated that they try to comply with the maintenance schedules but park maintenance is in large part weather and event driven.

**Finding:** The Maintenance Standards and facility Task Frequency Schedules, do not reflect current maintenance procedures. For example, the schedules call for division crews to line baseball/softball and football/soccer fields once a year. Division crews have not performed this task since 2006. Lining of fields is done by the user leagues and clubs who also supply their own field white. The Overlook, Banksville and Sheraden shelters are not included on the Western Division's maintenance schedule.

**Recommendation:** The Maintenance Standards and facility Task Frequency schedules need to be updated to reflect actual maintenance tasks.

### Performance Reporting

**Finding:** Performance reporting is not uniform throughout Parks Maintenance Divisions. All divisions complete driver's logs, foremen's daily reports and playground inspection reports. Some foremen complete a Monthly Performance Report and either keep them or send them to the former Assistant Director for Parks. Other foremen have stopped filling them out.

**Recommendation:** DPW administration needs to make a decision as to whether or not to continue monthly Performance Reports. If continued, the report must be completed uniformly.

### Monthly Playground Inspections

Each division has skilled or general laborers who conduct monthly safety checks on all playground equipment in that division.

**Finding:** The monthly playground equipment inspections and abatement reports are good tools for maintaining safe playground environments.

**Finding:** DPW has two certified playground inspectors who are recertified every three years by National Playground Safety Inspector (NPSI) for the National Park and Recreation Association (NRPA). The certified inspectors have provided one time training to the division skilled and general laborers who inspect the City's playgrounds.

**Recommendation:** Ideally, all DPW playground inspectors should receive NRPA certification. In the alternative, the playground inspectors should receive periodic training from the two inspectors who are recertified every three years.

### Regional Parks and Outside Parks Staffing

**Finding:** The Regional Asset District (RAD) funding restrictions for park maintenance personnel is both boon and bane to City park maintenance operations. The majority of personnel in the regional park divisions are RAD funded and are not permitted to work in the division's non-regional parks.

**Finding:** Having dedicated work crews for the Regional Parks ensures that those parks will be maintained as the jewels of the City park system but strains the division's ability to service some division's non-regional parks.

## Park Facility Ratings

In addition to the four regional parks, the auditors selected a 29% random sample of non-regional park facilities for testing. In accordance with the Division's written maintenance standards, conditions of playing fields, courts, playgrounds and shelters were evaluated as "good", "fair", or "poor".

**Finding:** Staff reductions and restrictions have strained the City's ability to effectively maintain all park facilities. In spite of the staffing restrictions, the majority of park facilities in the testing sample rated good and appeared safe and structurally sound.

## Regional Park Facilities

### Playground Equipment, Seating and Safety Surface

**Finding:** All playground equipment and seating was structurally sound. Ninety two (92 %) percent of swings and chutes, 50% of monkey bars and 42% of balance beams were rated good. The rest were rated fair for cosmetic reasons such as needing paint or stain. Ninety one (91 %) percent of benches were rated good. The four benches rated fair had some deterioration and needed stain/paint. Nine of ten safety padding surfaces were rated fair because of cracks, holes and areas of missing surface.

**Recommendation:** Replacing the entire play surface would be a capital expense and not routine maintenance. Large holes or missing areas should be repaired with similar material to extend the life of the surface and put off becoming a capital expense.

### Shelters

**Finding:** All shelter floors and bathrooms were in good condition. With two exceptions, all shelter tabling and seating was structurally sound. The majority of grills had broken or missing racks.

### Ball Fields, Basketball Courts and Tennis Courts

**Finding:** Overall conditions at the two ball fields visited in Highland and Frick Parks were rated good. Basketball court floor conditions in Highland and Frick Parks were rated fair because of cracks in the asphalt court surface. Court lines at Highland were in good condition and lines at Frick Park were rated fair. Only Frick Park had spectator seating and it was in good condition.

The auditors visited 17 tennis courts in three Regional Parks. (Frick Park tennis courts are maintained by a local tennis club and were excluded from inspection.) All court lines and the majority of court floors at 17 Regional Park tennis courts were rated good. Court signage, spectator seating and surrounding areas were rated good. Night lighting was good at Schenley and poor at Riverview. The worse conditions were broken fencing and exposed circuit breakers at two Riverview Park tennis courts.

**Recommendation:** Park Maintenance should repair all broken fences. Exposed circuit breakers are a danger to the public and a potential liability for the City.

**Finding:** Although the majority of Regional Park facilities were rated good, the condition of some facilities have slightly worsened since the 2003 audit. For example, more tennis courts had cracked playing surfaces and more playground safety padding had cracks and missing pieces.

### **Non Regional Park Facilities**

#### Playground Equipment, Seating, Safety Surface and Fencing

**Finding:** Twenty five percent (25 %) of the playgrounds in the testing sample had good safety padding, 61 percent was rated fair and 14 percent were in poor condition with cracks, holes or missing padding on 25% or more of the surface. Ninety four percent (94%) of swings were in good condition. The Warrington playground swing set was in fair condition and the Monongahela playground swing set was in poor condition. Ninety two (92 %) percent of chutes and 85% of monkey bars were rated good. The rest were rated fair because of graffiti. All seating was structurally sound but 26% of playground seats and 53% of the benches needed paint or stain. Playground fencing was in good condition with the exception of broken fencing at Garland Parklet.

**Recommendation:** Park maintenance should paint or stain park benches and seats on a regular basis in accordance with Division maintenance standards.

**Recommendation:** Park maintenance should immediately fix and replace broken fencing in playground areas. An injury could result in a law suit to the City.

**Finding:** The climbing ropes at Linden School playground were frayed, exposing the coiled metal interior. Sharp edged metal end pieces were also exposed. The auditors were told that the school has contacted the City through the 311 service line but had not received any response.

#### Shelters

One shelter in the testing sample was locked. Conditions were good at three of the four shelters inspected and poor at one (the McBride shelter).

## Ballfields, Basketball Courts and Tennis Courts

**Finding:** Sixty one percent (61%) of the 28 ball fields in the testing sample were in good condition. Four fields (Mission, Monongahela, Winter and East Hills) were rated poor. Twenty two fields had fencing. Fencing at 16 fields was good and fair at the remaining six due to holes in some sections and/or ends of fence fabric turned out and not tied down.

Twenty seven basketball courts throughout the city parks including 3 half courts were inspected. Six (22%) were in good condition, 13 or 48% were in fair condition with minor cracked floors and 8 (30%) were in poor condition with deep, wide floor cracks. Graffiti was noticeable on some court floors, posts, and backboards. Lines on 12 basketball courts (44%) were in good condition, 9 or 33 % were in fair condition and 6 or 22 % were in poor condition and unusable.

The auditors visited 19 non-regional park tennis courts. Court surface was good in 20% of the sample, fair in 50% and poor in 30%. Court lines were good in 80% of the courts and fair on the remaining 20%. Seventy percent of the courts had good netting, 10% had poor netting and 20% of the courts had no netting. Night lights were a problem at the non-regional park tennis courts with 44% of court lights in poor condition.

**Recommendation:** Timely maintenance of small cracks in tennis and basketball courts will prevent the problem from escalating to where replacing the entire court is necessary.

## Soccer Fields

The city has two soccer only fields: Schenley Oval, a fairly new turf field, and Panther Hollow, a natural grass field.

**Finding:** The artificial turf used in the construction of the Oval field is not the best quality available. This is the only turf field in the City and it is being over used and signs of wear and tear are already visible. Panther Hollow field is in poor condition.

**Finding:** Neighborhood clubs and schools use baseball/softball fields for soccer games. Because baseball/softball fields have dirt infields and mounds, they are not suitable for soccer games and at times could be dangerous to play on.

**Recommendation:** During field inspections the auditors observed a few baseball/softball fields that are not being used. Park maintenance should study the feasibility of converting these ball fields that are not utilized into soccer only fields.

## Follow Up Inspections

Because the audit findings refer to maintenance and equipment conditions at the end of the parks active season, the audit was extended to assess DPW's compliance with pre-season maintenance tasks on facilities in the testing sample.

**Finding:** As of May 9, 2009, Park Maintenance had not repainted any basketball or tennis court lines. Fencing problems from the fall still existed. Problems include holes in the fabric and detached fabric from side post (Riverview Park), broken bar and detached top fabric from top bar (Tropical Parklet).

**Recommendation:** Foremen and supervisors should survey all park facilities within their divisions to identify needed repairs. At minimum, repairs should be made to correct potentially harmful conditions such as broken fencing.

The auditors inspected 52 sites at all 4 Regional City Parks and 119 sites at 47 non-regional City parks. The 51 parks represent a 30% sample of all parks facilities listed on DPW's web site. Thirty one (31) ball fields, 51 playgrounds, 36 tennis courts, 29 basketball courts, 1 volleyball court, 2 soccer fields and 21 picnic shelters were inspected.

The great majority of park facilities were in good or fair condition and appeared safe and structurally sound. Three fields, Winter, Mission Street and East Hills Park fields were in poor condition because of excessive overgrowth and one outfield landslide. Since the last audit, the auditors observed widespread deteriorating playground safety padding and tennis court cracks. Excessive safety padding deterioration and court surface cracking is difficult to maintain and should be replaced as capital expenditures.

Despite needed capital improvements and Regional Asset District restrictions on park maintenance staff deployment, DPW's Parks Maintenance Division, on the whole, appears to effectively maintain City park facilities.

Sincerely,

Michael E. Lamb  
City Controller

## INTRODUCTION

This performance audit of the Department of Public Works (DPW) Parks Maintenance Program was conducted pursuant to Section 404(c) of the Pittsburgh Home Rule Charter. A previous performance audit of DPW's Park Maintenance Program was released in 2003. This audit focuses on the effectiveness of the Department's maintenance of City parks and park facilities such as shelters, playgrounds and playing fields.

## OVERVIEW

In 1992, a departmental reorganization by the City Administration transferred all City park maintenance responsibilities from the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) to the Department of Public Works (DPW). DPW became responsible for maintaining all City outdoor park facilities while DPR retained responsibility for the maintenance of indoor facilities such as recreation and senior centers.

### City Park Organization

The City has over 2892 acres of park land. The four Regional Parks (Frick, Schenley, Highland and Riverview) are the largest, with a total of 1651 acres. The rest of the park system is comprised of numerous smaller parks and parklets. The recently created Grand View Scenic Byway Park (GVSBP) has been referred to as another Regional Park but cannot be officially designated as such until approved by the Allegheny Regional Asset District (RAD) board. Because the RAD draft budget for 2009 makes no provision for funding new grantees, it is unlikely that GVSBP will receive RAD funds next year.

### Regional Parks

Regional parks are distinguished by their larger size and are eligible for funding through the Allegheny Regional Asset District (RAD). The RAD is a special purpose area-wide unit of government that distributes grants to civic, cultural and recreational entities, libraries, parks and sports facilities. The distribution is made by a Board of Directors, four of whom are appointed by the County Executive, two appointed by the Mayor of Pittsburgh and one who is elected by the appointees. One half of the proceeds of the 1% Allegheny County Sales and Use Tax funds RAD grants.

Frick, Schenley, Highland and Riverview Parks were created in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries to provide open green spaces for City residents living in crowded



housing under a smoke filled sky. The two largest regional parks, Frick and Schenley were gifts from wealthy families to the City of Pittsburgh. Frick, the largest regional park at 559+ acres, was a gift from Henry Clay Frick in 1919. Frick is the only City Park with an endowment Trust Fund for the upkeep of the park.

Schenley, the second largest regional park with 417+ acres and founded in 1889, was donated by Mary Schenley. One of the most widely used parks in the City; Schenley is also used as a commuter route for motorists. Highland Park, the third largest regional park at 388 acres, was established by ordinance in 1889. Incremental purchase of lots increased the size of the park. In 1897 Christopher L. Magee provided funding for creation of a zoo in the park's northwest quadrant. The zoo was opened to the public in 1898 and became Pittsburgh's municipal zoo. The City is no longer responsible for zoo operations. In 1994, the Zoological Society of Pittsburgh assumed responsibility for administering zoo and aquarium operations.

Riverview Park, currently the smallest and hilliest City regional park at 287 acres, was created as a park by the City of Allegheny in 1894. When the City of Pittsburgh annexed the City of Allegheny in 1907, Riverview became one of Pittsburgh's four regional parks. If Grandview Scenic Byways Park obtains regional park designation, it will become the smallest regional park at 239 acres.

#### Neighborhood Parks and Parklets

According to DPW's website, its Parks Maintenance Division is responsible for 167 City owned parks, fields, parklets and recreation center facilities. The bulk of these non-regional park facilities are in the Eastern Division (29 facilities) and the fewest (13) are in the State Division.

#### State and Riverfront Parks

DPW's State Parks Division maintains Commonwealth owned Point State Park and the various City owned riverfront parks such as Allegheny Riverfront Park, Allegheny Landing Park and Northshore Riverfront Park.

#### Pittsburgh Regional Parks Master Plan

The Pittsburgh Regional Parks Master Plan, released in April 2001, was developed through a partnership between the City, the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, citizen's task force and private sector. The plan noted that the regional parks "have suffered from years of neglect, deferred maintenance and inappropriate interventions" and offered a 20 year blueprint to guide park restoration and maintenance. The maintenance operatives, design guidelines and other standards were geared to the regional parks but provided a blueprint for all City Park facilities.

#### Standards and Procedures: Park Facility Maintenance Programs

The Master Plan blueprint led to creation of a Standards and Procedures: Park Facility Maintenance Programs and Task and Frequency Schedules for each City park facility, including the Regional Parks. According to DPW administration these documents were created in 2002 and have undergone revisions. The Standards and Procedures include maintenance programs for the City's 330 courts, 128 fields, 134 playgrounds and 22 picnic shelters. Standards and procedures for weed control, snow and ice control, trail and turf maintenance are also included. The document lists "desired output" for completing each maintenance task. For example, line painting a court should take 45 minutes and installing or removal a basketball net should be completed in 15 minutes. These standards and procedures were last revised in January 2004.

### Task and Frequency Schedule

The Task and Frequency schedule is organized by Division and park facility. Each park facility has a list of task functions such as: empty trash cans, overseed, mow open areas, drag infield, reline courts, playground inspection, grill maintenance and clean restrooms. The number of functions depends on park facilities. For example, 51 functions are listed for Schenley Regional Park compared to 15 functions for Herron Hill Playground.

Each task is broken down into several performance standard units. These units include the size of the task area or the number of objects (e.g., trash cans); time it takes to complete the maintenance task and annual frequency the task should be done. Most of the maintenance standards are calculated according to the time it takes one person to complete the task. Emptying trash cans is calculated using a three man crew.

According to the Deputy Director, DPW uses these standards to determine how many people are needed to staff each Division. Task frequency is dependent on factors such as the weather and how busy the park is. For example, extensive periods of draught will result in less grass cutting than indicated by the maintenance standards.

### DPW Park Maintenance Organizational Structure

According to DPW's website, City Parks maintenance is organized into seven divisions: Eastern (including Frick), Northeast (including Highland Park), Northern (including Riverview Park), Schenley (including Schenley park), Southern, State and Western. These geographic named parks divisions have been renamed to the corresponding Public Works Street Division. For example, the Northern Division is now called the 1<sup>st</sup> Division, the Southern Division is the 4<sup>th</sup> Division and the Western Division is the 5<sup>th</sup> Division. However, because the Department's Standards and Procedures and Task and Frequency Schedules are organized by geographic division, the auditors' findings are displayed as such.

DPW's Assistant Director of Operations oversees the parks divisions. Divisional supervisors and foremen provide day to day oversight for full time and seasonal laborers, truck drivers, heavy equipment operators and clerks. Park maintenance is seasonal.

During snow season, parks personnel remove snow and salt park facilities and refurbish equipment for the upcoming seasons. Refurbishing includes painting trash cans and bleachers and repairing benches. In winter, the Riverview Park Activities Building becomes a workshop where picnic tables and benches from the entire First Division are sanded, painted and repaired. Similarly, a workshop is set up at Frick Park to make park signage.

In addition, parks crews sometimes assist with street maintenance tasks such as filling potholes and snow removal. In the spring, summer and fall the focus is on preparing and maintaining the public use park facilities such as courts, fields, playgrounds, shelters and green areas.

This audit focuses on the effectiveness of day to day park maintenance and distinguishes ongoing maintenance tasks from needed capital improvements.

## METHODOLOGY

The auditors reviewed the 2003 City Parks Maintenance performance audit, DPW's "Standards and Procedures: Parks Maintenance Program" (S&P) and the Task and Frequency Schedule. The Plan provides standards and procedures for maintaining various Park facilities such as playgrounds, courts and ball fields.

The auditors met with the DPW Director and Assistant Director to discuss park maintenance organization and maintenance standards and procedures. Division foremen were interviewed about maintenance task assignment procedures, compliance with task frequency schedules and performance reporting.

In addition to the four Regional Parks, the auditors selected a 29% random sample of the non-regional park facilities listed on DPW's website for testing. The Department of City Planning's Athletic Fields Analysis of February 2003 served as a guide for the Controller's 2003 parks maintenance performance audit. Field conditions were evaluated as "good", "fair", or "poor". The same evaluative standards in accordance with Parks Division Standards and Procedures were used for this audit.

During the month of September, the auditors conducted field inspections of playgrounds, courts and fields. The facilities were given one of the following ratings:

- Good indicates that the item or area is in near perfect condition or requires less than 5 percent repair.
- Fair denotes visible flaws, such as cracks, missing parts, rust, etc. and a maximum of 25 percent is in need of repair.
- Poor suggests an item or area is in need of immediate repair with a damage rating of approximately 50 percent and use of this area or item may be considered dangerous.

Applying standards can be subjective, so two auditors assessed and rated all the test facilities in an effort to provide consistency to the inspection process.

All the field inspection data was entered into an Excel program and analyzed. The resulting analysis is included in the body of the audit.

To assess DPW's compliance with facilities preparation for the upcoming season, in April the auditors revisited courts and field previously rated fair or poor. The objective was to determine if the previous deficiencies had been corrected for the upcoming season.

## **OBJECTIVES**

1. To assess the maintenance of park facilities by DPW's Parks Maintenance Division.
2. To assess compliance with DPW's "Parks Maintenance: Standards and Procedures" and Task and Frequency Schedules.
3. To assess the Division's performance measures, compilation and reporting.
4. To make recommendations for improvement.

## **SCOPE**

The scope of this performance audit is to assess the maintenance performance of DPW for City park fields, playgrounds and courts from fall 2008 through January 2009.

## FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Parks Maintenance Standards and Procedures

The *Standards and Procedures: Park Facility Maintenance Programs (S&P)* provides detailed information for court, turf, field, park, playground, shelter and trail maintenance. Also included are standards and procedures for park facility weed control and snow and ice removal. A desired output for the various maintenance tasks allocated by the time it takes to complete an area or item. For example, it should take one person 20 minutes to hand rake 1000 square feet of leaves and 10 minutes to trim one small tree. The manual was last revised in January 2004.

### Task and Frequency Schedule

The Task and Frequency Schedule is organized by park division and facility. Maintenance tasks or functions are listed for each facility along with the time needed to complete the task and how many times the task should be performed each year (annual frequency). These manuals and schedules were developed to assist division supervisors in assigning work. Task and Frequency Schedules appear to be revised as needed. The Northeast Division was last revised 1/22/08 and the Southern and Western Divisions 7/2/05.

The Task and Frequency Schedules include ongoing maintenance tasks such as litter pickup and field dragging and annual tasks such as bench, table, grill and bleacher maintenance. These annual maintenance tasks are completed prior to the start of the main season in April. Seasonal maintenance such as snow removal and salt spreading are also included.

### Compliance with Maintenance Frequency Schedule

**Finding:** Division supervisors stated that they try to comply with the maintenance schedules but park maintenance is in large part weather and event driven. Therefore, the Bureau's maintenance standards and frequency schedules are more akin to guides than rigid schedules.

**Finding:** The *Standards and Procedures: Park Facility Maintenance Programs (S&P)* and the facility Task Frequency Schedules, do not reflect current maintenance procedures. For example, the schedules call for division crews to line baseball/softball and football/soccer fields once a year. Division crews have not performed this task since 2006. Lining of fields is done by the user leagues and clubs who also supply their own field white.

**Finding:** Besides including tasks that are no longer performed, the S&P and Frequency Schedules do not capture maintenance tasks that have been added since the last revision.

For example, the Overlook, Banksville and Sheraden shelters are not included on the Western Division's maintenance schedule.

### **RECOMMENDATION NO. 1:**

The S&P Programs and facility Task Frequency schedules need to be updated to reflect actual maintenance tasks.

#### Performance Reporting

**Finding:** Performance reporting is not uniform throughout Parks Maintenance Divisions. All divisions complete driver's logs, foremen's daily reports and playground inspection reports. Some foremen complete a monthly Performance Report for their respective division while others have discontinued doing so.

#### Park Maintenance Assignment, Driver's Logs and Foremen's Daily Reports

The majority of on going non-winter park maintenance consists of grass cutting, field dragging and trash removal. Division foremen inspect each site a few times per week. Each morning, the foremen assign maintenance crews tasks for the day. Each division has established routes for established tasks, e.g., a rubbish route for emptying of trash cans. Crews are comprised of a truck driver and laborers.

Crew assignments are based on a number of factors including task frequency schedules, weather, foremen site inspections and permit or special events use. Crews must be assigned to clean up before and after a special event or permit use of a facility. Each truck driver fills out a daily Driver's Log which is turned to the foreman at the end of day. The Driver's Log details employee name, jobs completed and time to complete.

Foremen use information from the Driver's Log to fill out their Daily Report which usually is filled out the following morning. The Daily Reports use various codes to capture the type of maintenance, facility or place where the task was done and quantity of work performed by each division employee. Quantity of work is measured by unit, square or lineal feet, square or cubic yards and miles. The measurements are obtained from another Foremen's book.

**Finding:** The detailed Foremen's daily reports do not seem to be used for any type of performance analysis. According to Park administrators, the reports are turned into the division clerk for various data reporting purposes.



## Monthly Performance Reports

**Finding:** In 2008, a new Deputy Director was put in charge of parks maintenance. This new Deputy Director has not requested any monthly Performance Reports from the parks maintenance divisions.

**Finding:** There is inconsistency and confusion regarding Monthly Performance Reports. Some foremen continue to fill them out and either keep them or send them to the former Assistant Director for Parks. Other foremen have stopped filling them out.

## **RECOMMENDATION NO. 2:**

DPW administration needs to make a decision as to whether or not to continue monthly Performance Reports. If continued, the report must be completed uniformly.

## Bureau Performance Reporting: Citistats and PittMAPS

Prior to 2008, data from the Monthly Performance Reports was used to compile Park Maintenance Citistat reports. First used by the City of Baltimore in 2003, Citistats was a database system that allowed municipalities to collect information for performance evaluation purposes.

In 2008, Citistats was replaced by PittMAPS, the City of Pittsburgh's Management and Performance System. Citistat collected and reported a lot of data. According to the PittMAPS Manager, information fields were reduced to 1) eliminate information that was reported elsewhere such as labor hour and cost information and 2) to provide only information needed to assess day to day operations. The needed performance indicators were worked out at meetings with department management.

**Finding:** PittMAPS park maintenance data is reported with street maintenance and environmental services data and is sometimes difficult to distinguish which division or bureau performed the task.

For example, PittMAPS entries about the # of litter cans emptied only are identified by daily cycle, twice-daily cycle and other cycle. It is not known how many cans were emptied by parks or street maintenance crews.

## Monthly Playground Inspections

Each division has skilled or general laborers who conduct monthly safety checks on all playground equipment in that division. The inspectors check for operational safety and vandalism and fill out a safety inspection form. After the foreman signs off, the safety inspection form is sent to an Operations Manager who adds the information to an abated and unabated problem database.

The information is added to an Abatement Report (AR) sent to the Divisions each mid month. The AR lists the unabated problems identified on previous monthly playground safety inspection reports. The report provides spaces for the foremen to write in the date the repair was made. The updated AR is returned to the Operations Manager who updates the database with the date of abatement. The problem is then removed from next month's Abatement Report.

**Finding:** The monthly playground equipment inspections and abatement reports are good tools for maintaining safe playground environments.

**Finding:** DPW has two certified playground inspectors who are recertified every three years by National Playground Safety Inspector (NPSI) which is part of the program for the National Park and Recreation Association (NRPA). The certified inspectors have provided one time training to the division skilled and general laborers who inspect the City's playgrounds.

### **RECOMMENDATION NO. 3:**

Ideally, all DPW playground inspectors should receive NRPA certification. In the alternative, the playground inspectors should receive periodic training from the two inspectors who are recertified every three years.

#### **Regional Parks and Outside Parks Staffing**

**Finding:** The Regional Asset District (RAD) funding restrictions for park maintenance personnel is both boon and bane to City park maintenance operations. The majority of personnel in the regional park divisions are RAD funded and are not permitted to work in the division's non-regional parks.

**Finding:** Having dedicated work crews for the Regional Parks ensures that those parks will be maintained as the jewels of the City park system but strains the division's ability to service some division's non-regional parks.

The non-regional parks in the Northeast and Northern divisions seem the most affected. Fifteen (15) of the 17 employees in the Highland (Northeast) Division are RAD funded, leaving 2 employees (including the foreman) to service the division's 16 outside sites. These full time personnel are augmented by 4 to 5 seasonal workers from mid April through November.

Ten 10 of the 12 Northern employees are restricted to Riverview Park, leaving 2 employees to maintain the division's other 17 playgrounds and 21 ball fields.

Thirteen (13) of the Frick division's 20 employees are restricted to Frick regional Park leaving 7 unrestricted full time employees for the division's 27 other facilities. The division also has an unrestricted part time truck driver.

Seventeen (17) of the Schenley division's 22 employees are RAD funded and restricted to Schenley Regional Park.

### Park Facility Ratings

**Finding:** Staff reductions and restrictions have strained the City's ability to effectively maintain all park facilities. In spite of the staffing restrictions, the majority of park facilities in the testing sample appear to be safe and structurally sound.

The auditor's inspections and ratings focused on the condition of park facilities and amenities used by the public for recreation and leisure purposes. The auditors inspected playgrounds, basketball and tennis courts, softball fields, shelters, picnic tables and grills.

As described in the Methodology section, in addition to the four Regional Parks, the auditors selected a 29% random sample of the non-regional park facilities listed on DPW's website for testing. The regional park facilities rated in 2003 and 2008 were the same. The percent of non regional facilities tested in both audits was as follows: 54% of the playgrounds, 75% of the ball fields, 40 % of the tennis courts and 62% of the basketball courts.

## **REGIONAL PARK FACILITY INSPECTION RESULTS**

### **Playgrounds**

**Finding:** All playground equipment and seating was structurally sound. Equipment was rated fair for cosmetic reasons such as needing paint or stain. Some play equipment safety surface had deteriorated with excessive cracking and areas of missing surface.

The auditors rated the safety surface, play units, seating, water fountains, trash receptacles and playground areas of 12 Regional Park playgrounds: 1 at Frick Park, 6 at Schenley, 3 at Riverview and 2 at Highland Park.

#### Play Equipment Safety Surface

**Finding:** Safety surfaces under play equipment ranged from safety padding (10), wood chips (1), and grass (1). One of the ten playgrounds with the safety padding was in good condition. The remaining nine were in fair condition with cracks, holes and missing pieces. The wood chip and grass playground floors were in good condition.

#### **RECOMMENDATION NO. 4:**

Playground safety is a top priority. Safety padding should be replaced if the condition may cause an injury. Replacing the entire play surface would be a capital expense and not routine maintenance. Large holes or missing areas should be repaired with similar material to extend the life of the surface and put off becoming a capital expense.

#### Play Units

A play unit is the playground's main component of interconnected parts with slides, tubes, monkey bars, etc. If a set of swings was the only component of a playground, it too was rated as a unit.

#### Swings, Chutes, Monkey Bars and Balance Beams

**Finding:** Eleven out of twelve playgrounds had swings and chutes all in good condition. Six out of twelve playground monkey bars and five out of twelve playground balance beams were in good condition. The rest of the play units were rated fair because they appeared to not have been painted in a couple of seasons.

#### Playground Benches and Seats

What the auditors called "park benches" are seats separated from picnic tables. These benches may or may not have a back support and are made of either wood or metal.

The auditors inspected 43 park benches within the 12 playgrounds. Thirty nine benches were in good condition and the remaining four benches were in fair condition lacking paint/stain with some deterioration.

#### Playground Water fountains

**Finding:** Within the twelve playgrounds, auditors observed eight water fountains all in good condition. Five of the water fountains were manually operated and the remaining three water fountains were always running.

#### **RECOMMENDATION NO. 5:**

To conserve water, DPW should replace continuously running drinking fountains with manually operated units.

## Graffiti

Three out of twelve playgrounds had minor graffiti. The remaining nine playgrounds were graffiti free.

## Trash Receptacles

The forty two trash receptacles in place in the twelve playgrounds were in good condition. Forty trash cans were empty and two were full.

## Playground Area

Playground area refers to area surrounding the safety surfaced play equipment areas. All areas around the playground equipment were in good condition.

## **Shelters**

**Finding:** All shelter floors and bathrooms were in good condition. With two exceptions, all shelter tabling and seating was structurally sound. The majority of grills had broken or missing racks.

The auditors visited eight shelters at Highland Park, six shelters at Schenley Park and two shelters at Riverview Park. The auditors were not able to perform a complete assessment on all shelters. The Chapel shelter at Riverview Park was closed at the time of our visit; however the auditors were able to assess the physical structure and surrounding area including trash receptacles. The Activities Building/Pavilion at Riverview park was accessible because a gathering (senior day at the park) was being held at the time of our visit. The Vietnam Veteran Pavilion was also accessible to the auditors. This allowed us to perform a more thorough inspection. All other shelters were open structures, allowing for a total assessment.

The large shelters in the regional parks are equipped with bathrooms, kitchen, grills and numerous picnic tables and benches. The Rhododendron shelter at Highland Park, Activities Pavilion at Riverview Park and Vietnam Veterans Pavilion at Schenley Park are the largest shelters and feature playgrounds with water fountains. All shelters at the regional parks had concrete floors and were in good condition. All bathrooms were clean and in good condition.

## Picnic tables, Benches and Grills

The City's Picnic tables come with the benches connected to the table, one bench on each side of the table. In this audit these combination units are labeled as "picnic tables". The use of "benches" is for separate, stand-alone seating.

Out of 87 picnic tables inspected, 39% were in good condition and 59% needing paint or stain were rated fair condition. One table at the Pool Grove Shelter and one table

at the Lake Point Shelter in Highland Park were rated poor (one table was broken and a screw was sticking out of the other table).

There were also ten benches in the area around the shelters. All ten benches were in good condition.

Out of 23 grills inspected throughout the Regional Parks two were in poor condition (one at Memorial Grove and one at Sycamore Grove), representing 2% of the sample. Seven grills were in good condition and fourteen were rated fair. Missing or broken racks were the main problems with grills.

### Graffiti and Litter

There was very little Graffiti on tables and shelter posts. However, some carvings were visible on the picnic tables.

### Trash Receptacles

Memorial Grove shelter had only one trash receptacle. All other shelters had two or more trash receptacles. Twelve percent (12%) of the 58 trash receptacles were half full. All of them were in good condition.

### **Ball Fields and Courts**

**Finding:** Overall conditions at the two ball fields visited in Highland and Frick Parks were rated good.

Regional Parks do not have many ball fields. The auditors visited two ball fields, one at Highland Park next to the Farmhouse and the other, Stan Lederman field at Frick Park. The home plate of the field at Highland Park was in poor condition and player's benches in Stan Lederman field were in fair condition. Foul poles, fencing, spectator seating and field signs at both ball fields were in good conditions. Only Stan Lederman ball field at Frick Park had night lighting and trash receptacles and they were all in good condition. Areas around both fields were also in good condition.

### Basketball Courts

#### **Finding:**

The auditors visited two basketball courts, one at Frick Park and one at Highland Park. Floor conditions for both courts were rated fair because of cracks in the asphalt court surface. Court lines at Highland Park were in good condition and lines at Frick Park were rated fair. Only Frick Park had spectator seating and it was in good condition. The water fountain at the Highland Park court was in good condition and the Frick Park court did not have a water fountain. Fencing, areas around the courts, court signs, trash

receptacles and basketball posts were in good condition at both locations. The court in Highland Park was missing one net.

#### Tennis Courts

**Finding:** All court lines and the majority of court floors at the 17 tennis courts were rated good. Court signage and surrounding areas were rated good. Spectator seating where available was in good condition. Broken fencing and exposed circuit breakers at two Riverview Park tennis courts were the worst conditions.

The auditors visited 17 tennis courts in three Regional Parks. (Frick Park tennis courts are maintained by a local tennis club and were excluded from inspection.) Four out of 17 court floors were in fair condition with cracks visible on the court surface. Four courts needed new nets. Court lines were rated good at all courts. Cabling at Highland and Riverview Park courts were in fair condition and cabling at Schenley was in good condition. Spectator seating at Schenley Park and Highland Park were in good condition. Riverview Park did not have spectator seating. Tennis courts at Schenley and Riverview Parks had night lighting. The lighting was rated good at Schenley Park courts and poor at Riverview Park courts. Court signs, court surrounding area and conditions of the paths to courts were rated good at all four regional parks. The fencing surrounding two courts at the Riverview Park was broken and circuit breakers were out in the open and accessible behind the broken fence.

#### **RECOMMENDATION NO. 6:**

Park Maintenance should repair all broken fences. Exposed circuit breakers are a danger to the public and a potential liability for the City.

#### Facility Comparison Ratings

The following Tables compare the Controller’s Regional Park facilities ratings in 2003 and 2008. In both audits, the same facilities were rated with the same evaluative criteria.

**TABLE 1**

<b>2003 vs. 2008 COMPARISON OF 2 REGIONAL PARK SOFTBALL/BASEBALL FIELDS--PERCENTAGE RATED GOOD</b>					
<b>YEAR</b>	<b>Field Condition</b>	<b>Players Bench Condition</b>	<b>Spectators Bench Condition</b>	<b>Fence Condition</b>	<b>Trash Receptacles Condition</b>
<b>2003</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<b>2008</b>	50%	50%	100%	100%	100%

**TABLE 2**

<b>2003 vs. 2008 COMPARISON OF 2 REGIONAL PARK BASKETBALL COURTS--PERCENTAGE RATED GOOD</b>			
<b>YEAR</b>	<b>FLOOR CONDITION</b>	<b>BACKBOARDS (2 PER COURT)</b>	<b>2 NETS PER COURT</b>
<b>2003</b>	50%	100%	100%
<b>2008</b>	0%	100%	75%

**TABLE 3**

<b>2003 vs. 2008 COMPARISON OF 24 REGIONAL PARK TENNIS COURTS--PERCENTAGE RATED GOOD</b>				
<b>YEAR</b>	<b>COURT CONDITION</b>	<b>COURT LINES</b>	<b>NET CONDITION</b>	<b>NIGHT LIGHTS</b>
<b>2003</b>	83%	100%	100%	100%
<b>2008</b>	76%	100%	76%	87%

**TABLE 4**

<b>2003 vs. 2008 COMPARISON OF 12 REGIONAL PARK PLAYGROUNDS--PERCENTAGE RATED GOOD</b>				
<b>YEAR</b>	<b>FLOORING</b>	<b>SWINGS</b>	<b>CHUTES</b>	<b>BENCHES</b>
<b>2003</b>	83%	100%	90%	100%
<b>2008</b>	25%	100%	100%	91%

**TABLE 5**

<b>2003 vs. 2008 COMPARISON OF 14 REGIONAL PARK SHELTERS--PERCENTAGE RATED GOOD</b>					
<b>YEAR</b>	<b>Flooring Condition</b>	<b>Table Condition</b>	<b>Bench Condition</b>	<b>Grills</b>	<b>Bathrooms Cleaned</b>
<b>2003</b>	90%	98%	100%	96%	100%
<b>2008</b>	100%	39%	100%	30%	100%



**Findings:** Conditions of some Regional Park facilities have slightly worsened since the 2003 audit.

- The player benches at Frick Regional Park softball field have declined since the 2003 audit mainly due to lack of paint.
- Regional park tennis court playing floors have declined since 2003. There are more tennis courts with cracked surfaces and courts needing new netting and night light repair.
- The percent of Playground Safety flooring rated good in 2003 is down from 83 percent to 25 percent. There are more playgrounds with cracks and missing pieces in the safety flooring. These surfaces are beyond repair and will need replaced as a capital expense.
- Conditions of picnic tables and grills at the Regional Park shelters have worsened since the last audit. The tables need painted or stained and grill racks need repaired.

## **NON-REGIONAL PARK FACILITY INSPECTION RESULTS**

### **Playgrounds**

The auditors inspected 39 randomly selected non- regional park playgrounds. The playgrounds were located in neighborhood parks and parklets or were adjacent to recreation centers.

All but three playgrounds had safety padding. Safety padding is installed to prevent serious injury when a child falls. There are also playgrounds with both safety padding and wood chips floors. Wood chips are used under the swings and safety padding is installed under the slides and bars.

**Finding:** Twenty five (25) percent of the playgrounds had good safety padding, 61 percent was rated fair and 14 percent were in poor condition. Fair and poor surfaces had cracks, holes or missing padding on 25% or more of the surface.

### **Swings**

A swing set includes one or more swing hangers and swing seats. Thirty three out of thirty nine playgrounds had swings. Most swings were in good condition with a few exceptions. The Warrington playground swing set was in fair condition and the Monongahela playground swing set was in poor condition. Warrington issues were cosmetic: equipment had an aged and dilapidated appearance. All swings at Monongahela Playground looked old and dilapidated and one swing was completely broken.

## Chutes

Out of 39 playgrounds visited by the auditors, 38 playgrounds had chutes. Thirty five chutes were in good condition and three chutes located at Warrington playground, Grandview Park and Armstrong field were in fair condition because of excess graffiti. All were structurally sound.

## Monkey bars

Of the 39 playgrounds visited, 27 playgrounds had monkey bars, 23 in good condition and four in fair condition because of graffiti.

## Linden School Playground

While inspecting the playground at the Linden school in the Eastern Division, it was brought to the auditors' attention by a teacher that the climbing unit was in dangerous condition.

**Finding:** The climbing ropes at Linden School playground were frayed, exposing the coiled metal interior. Sharp edged metal end pieces were also exposed. The auditors were told that the school has contacted the City through the 311 service line but had not received any response.

## Park Benches

The auditors inspected 170 park benches at the 39 playgrounds. Forty seven percent of the park benches were in good condition and fifty three percent of the benches were in fair condition needing a fresh coat of paint or stain. None of these were broken.

## Seats

The auditors inspected 96 seats throughout the 39 playgrounds. Seventy four percent of the seats were in good condition and twenty six percent were in fair condition mostly needed painted or stained.

## **RECOMMENDATION NO. 7:**

While most park benches and seats were in good condition, park maintenance should make sure to paint or stain park benches and seats that are in fair and poor condition on a regular basis. Park Facility Maintenance Programs states: "benches, Grills, bike racks, tables, bleachers, litter receptacles, etc., should be painted on a yearly basis."

## Water fountains

There were twenty three water fountains at thirty nine playgrounds. Out of 23

Water fountains, nine water fountains were in good condition, twelve were in fair condition and two, one at East Carnegie and one at Lincoln Place, were broken. Seven water fountains were always running, seven were manually operated, and 9 were turned off.

The previous audit (performance audit conducted in 2003) showed that the Water fountain at the East Carnegie playground was in poor condition.

### **RECOMMENDATION NO. 8:**

In response to the 2003 audit recommendation regarding broken water fountains, DPW stated it was the responsibility of Department of General Services to fix broken water fountains. Because DPW is now responsible for this type of maintenance, park maintenance should make sure to repair the broken water fountains.

### **Graffiti**

Graffiti was a problem in 14 out of 39 playgrounds. Two playgrounds, Olympia Park and Warrington had more than 50% of surface areas covered with graffiti. Three playgrounds, Grandview Park, Pauline and Armstrong had extensive graffiti.

### **Trash Receptacles**

There were seventy nine trash receptacles in thirty nine playgrounds. All trash cans were in good condition.

### **Playground area**

The playground area is the space that surrounds the components of a playground. Twenty playground areas were in good condition, seventeen were in fair condition and two playground areas, Monongahela and Warrington were in poor condition. Most fences surrounding playground areas were in good condition with the exception of the fence at Garland Parklet. Fencing at the Garland Parklet was broken and has fallen on the sidewalk and grass area of the playground.

### **RECOMMENDATION NO. 9:**

Park maintenance should immediately fix and replace broken fencing in playground areas. An injury could result in a law suit to the City.

## **Shelters**

The auditors visited five non-regional park shelters located at Fine View playground and Brighton Heights Park in the North, McBride Park in the South, Oakwood playground and West End Park in the West. Of these shelters only the West End Park shelter is an enclosed building with rest rooms and kitchen facilities. Fine View, Brighton Heights and Oakwood are totally constructed out of wood and have concrete floors. The shelter at McBride Park is constructed out of stone and concrete.

The auditors were able to inspect four of the five shelters; the West End shelter was locked at the time of our visit. At the McBride shelter two indoor grills, concrete floor, picnic tables and benches were in poor condition. Graffiti and trash was found inside and outside of the shelter. The same poor conditions were reported for this shelter in the previous audit. All other shelters were found to be in good condition.

Only the shelter at Oakwood playground had 6 trash receptacles and they were all in good condition.

### **RECOMMENDATION NO. 10:**

The indoor grill at the McBride shelter was in poor condition as it was in 2003. Park maintenance should consider rebuilding this grill or raze it and provide out door grills for this shelter.

### **Baseball/Softball Fields in City Parks**

According to the Field Maintenance Program:

- All fence material must be intact.
- DPW personnel will line all fields for the first time.
- Each infield must have a stockpile of 1 to 2 tons of clay for repairs.
- Each ball field should have a foul pole down the left and right field lines and must be painted a visible color (yellow) so as to be clearly seen from the backstop.
- Each field must be dragged a minimum of once per week from April through August.

The auditors inspected the condition of 28 ball fields, 8 in the East, 3 in West, 5 in the North, 9 in the South and 3 in the Schenley Division.

Out of 28 ball fields, 22 were surrounded by fencing. 16 of the 22 fences were in good condition. Six were in fair condition with holes in some sections and/or ends of fence fabric turned out and not tied down.

Field inspection revealed that 39 percent of the fields are in fair or poor condition. Among those in poor condition are Mission field, Monongahela field and Winter field in the South and East Hills in the East.

There was a land slide and broken fence at the center field of the Mission field. The infield has not been dragged and grass has grown all over the infield. (picks# 45,46). Garbage was scattered on the pathway to the field and next to player's benches.

Per a Division foreman, due to the lack of manpower, DPW has not lined the ball fields in the past few years and has stopped providing field white. Local communities and leagues now do their own field lining and supply their own white.

DPW no longer stockpiles clay for repairs at each ball field. However, there is a central location (under Panther Hollow Bridge) that clay is stockpiled for use for all Divisions.

### Foul poles

The auditors did not observe any foul poles at 9 ball fields; 4 fields had only one foul pole (left or right). Foul poles at the remaining 15 ball fields were in good condition.

### Infields

Infield conditions at the 11 ball fields (grass grown, footprints, etc.) indicated that the fields had not been recently dragged according to the Field Maintenance Program. However, the minimum weekly field dragging is to occur April through August and the auditors field inspections were done in September when ongoing dragging is no longer required.

### Seating

According to DPW guidelines:

- All seating must be in good condition. Any seating that is splintered or broken (wood) or has exposed sharp edge (aluminum) must be replaced.
- All seating must be painted on a yearly basis.
- All bleachers should be placed on an asphalt pad for easier cleaning and maintenance.
- All seating, where applicable, must be anchored or chained to eliminate theft or relocation.

All ball fields with the exception of Monongahela had player benches. 67 Percent of the benches were in fair condition and 14 percent were in poor condition. All of them required paint.

22 out of 28 ball fields had spectators seating. 55 percent were in fair and 4 percent were in poor condition. All of them required paint. The remaining 41 percent were in good condition.

### Night Lighting

12 percent of the lights inspected were in fair and 10 percent were in poor condition. The auditors did not inspect night lighting during evening hours.

### **RECOMMENDATION NO. 11:**

Broken lights should be replaced to insure adequate lighting for games, provide safety and deter vandalism.

### Field signs

Of the 28 ball fields in our sample, 32 percent did not have a visible sign identifying the field.

### Area around the field

The areas around the fields were in good condition. The auditors also inspected all trash receptacles located near each field. Out of 53 trash receptacles 68 percent were in good condition, 30 percent were in fair condition and 2 percent were in poor condition.

### Courts

According to DPW's Court Maintenance Program:

- The entire surface (asphalt, clay, synthetic, etc.) must be canvassed to remove all debris (sticks, stones, glass, broken branches, leaves, sand, dirt, mud, etc.).
- Each April, or earlier if the weather permits, all court line should be repainted.
- Fencing problems such as holes in the fabric, bottom fabric turned up, missing line posts/clamps /tension bars/ ties wire, exposed sharp edges of fabric, etc that could be injurious to the public must be addressed with in-house personnel or a fencing contractor in a timely manner
- Nets must be installed on all goals and must be replaced as the nets show wear and tear or are completely missing.

This is for all courts including but not limited to: Basketball, Tennis, Volleyball, Street hockey, horseshoe, Bocce, and multi-purpose.

## Basketball Courts

### Floors

The auditor inspected a total of 27 basketball courts throughout the city parks. There were 3 half courts included in 27 courts. Six or 22% were in good condition, 13 or 48% were in fair condition with minor cracked floors and 8 or 30% were in poor condition with deep and wide cracks on the floor. Graffiti was noticeable on some court floors, posts, and backboards.

### Court lines

Inspection results of the court lines indicated that 12 or 44% were in good condition, 9 or 33 % were in fair condition and 6 or 22 % were in poor condition.

The following table represents the condition of remaining properties of the basketball courts in the testing sample.

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>NUMBER AVAILABLE</b>	<b>GOOD%</b>	<b>FAIR%</b>	<b>POOR%</b>	<b>MISSING</b>
<b>Nets</b>	47	62	17	21	4
<b>Backboards</b>	49	55	39	6	2
<b>Posts</b>	50	59	35	6	0
<b>Fences</b>	25	68	24	8	2

### Seating and Water Fountains

Nine out of 27 basketball courts had spectator seating (33%). Spectator seating at Pauline and Garland parklet were moved on to the basketball court creating dangerous situation for players and spectators.

The auditors inspected total of 10 water fountains around the basketball courts. Five or fifty percent were in good condition, three or thirty percent were in fair condition and two or 20 percent were in poor condition.

### Court Signs

Only 7, or 26%, of the basketball courts had identifying court signs. Four of those were in good condition, and three in fair condition.

### Night Lighting

Out of 29 night-lights in the basketball courts, 22 or 76% were in good condition, 4 or 14% were in fair condition and 3 or 10% were in poor condition. For lights in poor condition, the shields were broken and the bulbs were missing.

### Trash Receptacles

The auditors inspected 33 trash receptacles near the basketball courts. All were in good condition.

### Areas around the courts

The areas around the courts were grass, asphalt/concrete, resting area or another sports activity related court or field. The auditors inspected the areas where it was grass, asphalt/concrete or resting area. The following table shows results of the inspection.

<b>SIDE</b>	<b>GOOD %</b>	<b>FAIR %</b>	<b>POOR %</b>
<b>1</b>	90	5	5
<b>2</b>	88	12	0
<b>3</b>	71	29	0
<b>4</b>	75	25	0

### Tennis Courts

According to DPW's Court Maintenance Program:

- Except where nets are left installed on courts year round, the remaining nets should be installed during the first week of April and removed at the end of November.
- Employee must ensure that all nets and hardware are functional at the time of installation and as courts are maintained and cleaned on a regular scheduled basis. Perform repair/replacement in a timely manner.

Most tennis courts within a fenced in area containing more than one court. The auditors visited 19 courts in six Divisions in addition to the 17 courts located in the regional parks.

### **Tennis Court Assessment**

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>GOOD %</b>	<b>FAIR %</b>	<b>POOR%</b>	<b>MISSING %</b>
<b>Court Floor</b>	20	50	30	0
<b>Court Line</b>	80	20	0	0
<b>Nets</b>	70	0	10	20
<b>Cabling</b>	40	30	10	20
<b>Fence</b>	70	30	0	0
<b>Spectator Seats</b>	20	40	10	30
<b>Path to Court</b>	80	20	0	0
<b>Court Sign</b>	20	10	0	70
<b>Court Surrounding</b>	71	29	0	0
<b>Night Lighting</b>	44	13	44	0



Tennis courts with poor conditions had wide and deep cracks causing grass to grow on the court floor. East Hills Park tennis courts were in poor condition. Grass has grown on the court floors, there were no nets and cablings, fence posts were popped out of the ground, and there were no trash receptacles. Herron Hill tennis courts are another example of tennis courts in poor condition.

**RECOMMENDATION NO. 12:**

Timely maintenance of small cracks in tennis and basketball courts will prevent the problem from escalating to where replacing the entire court is necessary.

These courts are unusable. Whether the courts are unusable because of the poor condition or whether the poor condition developed because no one uses them is unknown.

Night lights were a problem at the tennis courts with 44% of court lights in poor condition.

**Soccer Fields**

The city has two soccer only fields: Schenley Oval which is a fairly new turf field and Panther Hollow which is a natural grass field.

**Finding:** The artificial turf used in the construction of the Oval field is not the best quality available. This is the only turf field in the City and it is being over used and signs of wear and tear are already visible. Panther Hollow field is in poor condition.

**Finding:** Neighborhood clubs and schools use baseball/softball fields for soccer games. Considering baseball/softball fields have dirt infields and mounds, they are not suitable for soccer games and at times could be dangerous to play on.

**RECOMMENDATION NO. 13:**

During field inspections the auditors observed that there are a few baseball/softball fields that are not being used. Park maintenance should study the feasibility of converting these ball fields that are not utilized into soccer only fields.

## DIVISION and REGIONAL PARK COMPARISON

The auditors compared the percent of selected facility features rated good in each Division and in the Regional Parks. N. East, North, South and West refer to the North Eastern, Northern, Southern and Western Divisions, respectively.

<b>SOFTBALL/BASEBALL FIELD- PERCENTAGE RATED GOOD BY DIVISION and REGIONAL PARK</b>							
<b>Feature</b>	<b>Eastern</b>	<b>N. East</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>Schenley*</b>	<b>South</b>	<b>West</b>	<b>Regional</b>
<b>Field Condition</b>	57%	NA	80%	100%	40	66	50
<b>Player's Bench Condition</b>	29%	NA	0%	100%	10	66	50
<b>Spectator's Bench Condition</b>	57%	NA	20%	33%	20	33	50
<b>Fence Condition</b>	71%	NA	60%	66%	40	100	100
<b>Trash Receptacles Condition</b>	56%	NA	87%	88%	30	83	100

\*Division, not including Schenley Regional Park.

<b>BASKETBALL COURTS- PERCENTAGE RATED GOOD BY DIVISION and REGIONAL PARK</b>							
<b>Feature</b>	<b>Eastern</b>	<b>N. East</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>Schenley*</b>	<b>South</b>	<b>West</b>	<b>Regional</b>
<b>Floor Condition</b>	33	0	25	50	20	0	0
<b>Backboards (2 per court)</b>	75	50	50	50	20	58	100
<b>Nets (2 per court)</b>	66	0	50	37	40	83	75

\*Division, not including Schenley Regional Park.

<b>TENNIS COURTS- PERCENTAGE RATED GOOD BY DIVISION and REGIONAL PARK</b>							
<b>Feature</b>	<b>Eastern</b>	<b>N. East</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>Schenley*</b>	<b>South</b>	<b>West</b>	<b>Regional</b>
<b>Court Condition</b>	40	0	0	NA	100	50	76
<b>Court Lines</b>	60	100	100	NA	100	100	100
<b>Net Condition</b>	40	100	100	NA	100	100	76
<b>Night Lights</b>	18	100	100	NA	100	NA	87

\*Division, not including Schenley Regional Park.

<b>PLAYGROUND- PERCENTAGE RATED GOOD BY DIVISION and REGIONAL PARK</b>							
<b>Feature</b>	<b>Eastern</b>	<b>N. East</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>Schenley*</b>	<b>South</b>	<b>West</b>	<b>Regional</b>
<b>Flooring</b>	30	0	71	60	29	63	25
<b>Swings</b>	100	100	100	100	75	88	100
<b>Chutes</b>	100	100	100	100	57	100	100
<b>Benches</b>	38	100	57	91	61	83	91

\*Division, not including Schenley Regional Park.

<b>SHELTERS- PERCENTAGE RATED GOOD BY DIVISION and REGIONAL PARK</b>							
<b>Features</b>	<b>Eastern</b>	<b>N. East</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>Schenley*</b>	<b>South</b>	<b>West</b>	<b>Regional</b>
<b>Flooring Condition</b>	NA	NA	100	NA	0	100	100
<b>Table Condition</b>	NA	NA	20	NA	0	50	39
<b>Bench Condition</b>	NA	NA	20	NA	0	0	100
<b>Grills</b>	NA	NA	100	NA	0	NA	30
<b>Bathrooms Cleaned</b>	NA	NA		NA	NA	NA	100

\*Division, not including Schenley Regional Park.

## Follow Up Inspections

Because the audit findings refer to maintenance and equipment conditions at the end of the parks active season, the audit was extended to assess DPW's compliance with pre season maintenance tasks.

According to the court maintenance program, "each April or **earlier if the weather permits**, all court lines should be repainted". The auditors re-inspected 17 basketball and tennis courts in regional and non-regional parks with court lines and fencing in fair or poor condition. The auditors also revisited ball fields at these locations where there was one. The re-inspection was done on April 14, 15, 16 and 30 of 2009. Final inspection was done on May 6, May 7, and May 9 of 2009.

Re-inspection sites were as follows:

**Eastern Division:** Leslie Park, East hills Park, Fifty Seventh Street playground and Frick Park.

**Northern Division:** Cross and Strauss Parklet, Fowler playground and Riverview Park.

**Schenley Division:** Bud Hammer Playground, Cliffside Parklet.

**Western Division:** East Carnegie Parklet, West End Park, Pauline Parklet, Tropical Parklet, Oakwood Playground, and Shaler Parklet.

**Southern Division:** Winters Playground.

**Northeast Division:** Garland Parklet

## **Findings:**

As of May 9, 2009, Park Maintenance has not repainted any basketball or tennis court lines at the above listed sites. Fencing problems still exist. Problems include holes in the fabric and detached fabric from side post (Riverview Park), broken bar and detached top fabric from top bar (Tropical Parklet).

## **RECOMMENDATION NO. 14:**

Foremen and supervisors should survey all park facilities within their divisions to identify needed repairs. At minimum, repairs should be made to correct potentially harmful conditions such as broken fencing.

## **CONCLUSION:**

The auditors inspected 52 sites at all 4 Regional City Parks and 119 sites at 47 non-regional City parks. The 51 parks represent a 30% sample of all parks facilities listed on DPW's web site. Thirty one (31) ball fields, 51 playgrounds, 36 tennis courts, 29 basketball courts, 1 volleyball court, 2 soccer fields and 21 picnic shelters were inspected.

The great majority of park facilities were in good or fair condition and appeared safe and structurally sound. Three fields, Winter, Mission Street and East Hills Park fields were in poor condition because of excessive overgrowth and one outfield landslide. Since the last audit, the auditors observed widespread deteriorating playground safety padding and tennis court cracks. Excessive safety padding deterioration and court surface cracking is difficult to maintain and should be replaced as capital expenditures.

Despite needed capital improvements and Regional Asset District restrictions on park maintenance staff deployment, DPW's Parks Maintenance Division, on the whole, appears to effectively maintain the City's park facilities.

