



2015 Community Report Card on the  
State of Maintenance in Oakland Parks



# Oakland Parks and Recreation Foundation

*Providing financial and volunteer resources, and advocacy for  
Recreation programs and Parks in Oakland*

- Oakland Parks Coalition merged with Friends of Oakland Parks and Recreation in January, 2015, to form Oakland Parks and Recreation Foundation.
- 2015 was the 10<sup>th</sup> consecutive year of the annual park survey and report and the first year of its production under the banner of OPRF.

# Healthy, Attractive Parks and Medians provide health, economic and social benefits.

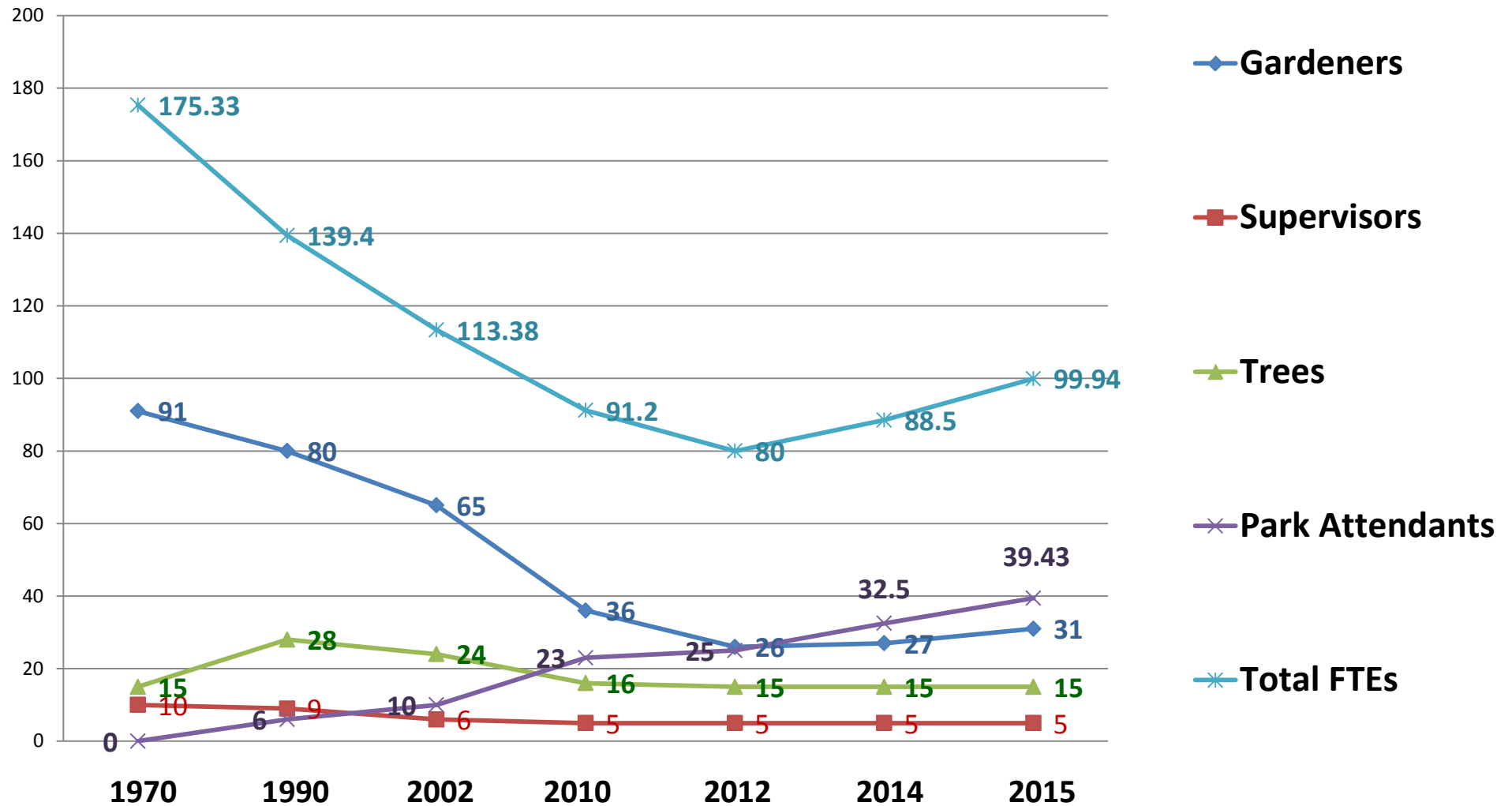
Public Works maintains....

- 130 parks, regional-serving, community, neighborhood, pocket parks, tot-lots
- 45 landscaped areas at public buildings
- 10 plazas
- 14 parking lots with landscaping
- 126 medians

Let us commit to protecting these resources  
for future generations.

# Park Maintenance Staffing Through the Decades

## Park Maintenance from 1970 to Present



# Why do we conduct an annual survey of Oakland parks?

- To bring urgent problems to the attention of Oakland Public Works.
- To synthesize and analyze the survey data and describe our findings about park conditions in the annual report to our City.
- To make recommendations which we feel would enhance the park experience.
- To drive home the principle that parks are key to the social and economic health of our city and need a sufficient and stable source of maintenance funding to keep them viable.

# Love Your Park Day Survey

- OPRF stewards and volunteers surveyed a total of 113 parks, plazas and landscaped areas in the month of September. The final survey sweep was conducted by these volunteers on October 3, 2015.



# RATING RANGE

WORST = 1

2

3

4

5 = BEST



## 2015 LOVE YOUR PARKS DAY SURVEY

Rate every question by circling one rating only. More is better: 5 = Best, 1 = Worst. N/A = Not Applicable

### 1. PICNIC AREAS (Picnic areas are designated by picnic tables with benches )

a. Is the picnic area generally litter-free?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
b. Are enough trash receptacles available in the picnic area?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
c. Is the water fountain in the picnic area working? (no fountain? N/A)	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
d. Are barbecues in good condition? (no barbecues? N/A)	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
e. Are picnic benches & tables in good condition?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
f. Are picnic benches & tables graffiti-free?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

### 2. RESTROOMS Freestanding Only (not in Rec Centers, NOT porta-potties) No restroom?—circle N/A for all.

a. Is the restroom open? (If open circle 5. Closed? circle 1 & N/A—other questions)	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
b. Are toilets clean & working?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
c. Are sinks clean & working?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
d. Are trash receptacles available?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
e. Is the bathroom clean?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
f. Are doors on stalls & do locks work?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
g. Are supplies (soap, paper towels, toilet paper) available?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
h. Are restrooms free of odor?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
i. Are restrooms free of graffiti?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

### 3. HARDSCAPE, FURNITURE, SIGNAGE

a. Are signs graffiti-free?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
b. Are fences in good condition?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
c. Are benches/seating areas in good condition?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
d. Are the benches/seating areas graffiti-free?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
e. Are walkways in good condition?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

### 4. HOMELESS

a. Is there evidence of homeless people <u>using</u> this park? (If the answer is yes give this a low rating.)	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
b. Is there evidence of homeless people <u>living</u> in this park? (If the answer is yes give this a low rating.)	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

### 5. GOPHER HOLES AND MOUNDS

a. Is the landscape free of gopher holes & mounds?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
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### 6. GREENERY

#### GRASS & GROUND COVER

a. Is the grass mowed?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
b. Is the grass edged?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
c. Is the area free of animal poop?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
d. Is the area cover free of bare spots?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
e. Is the area litter-free?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

#### FLOWERS & SHRUBS

f. Do planted areas (shrubs or flowers) appear to be thriving?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
g. Are planted areas (shrubs or flowers) weeded?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
h. Are shrubs pruned?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
i. Are the planted areas litter-free?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

#### TREES

j. Are trees in good condition (free of dead branches)?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
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### 7. OUTDOOR SPORTS AREAS

a. Is the turf/grass (sports fields only) in good condition?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
b. Is court (tennis or basketball) surfacing in good condition?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
c. Are courts free of pools of water?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
d. Are drinking fountains at sports fields or courts working?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
e. Is there netting (tennis or basketball) where it is needed?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
f. Are courts (tennis or basketball) properly marked with lines?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
g. Are bleachers graffiti-free?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
h. Are bleachers in good condition?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
i. Are trash receptacles available?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
j. Are the sports areas litter-free?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

### 8. OUTDOOR CHILDREN'S PLAY AREAS

a. Is the play area free of litter?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
b. Is at least one trash receptacle available?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
c. Is the sand or fiber clean?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
d. Is play equipment in good condition?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
e. Is the resilient surface/safety padding in good condition?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
f. Is play equipment free of graffiti?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
g. Is seating for parents in good condition?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
h. Is there a working water fountain in this area?						

PLEASE GIVE THIS PARK/AREA AN OVERALL RATING.

1	2	3	4	5	
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# Presentation Focus

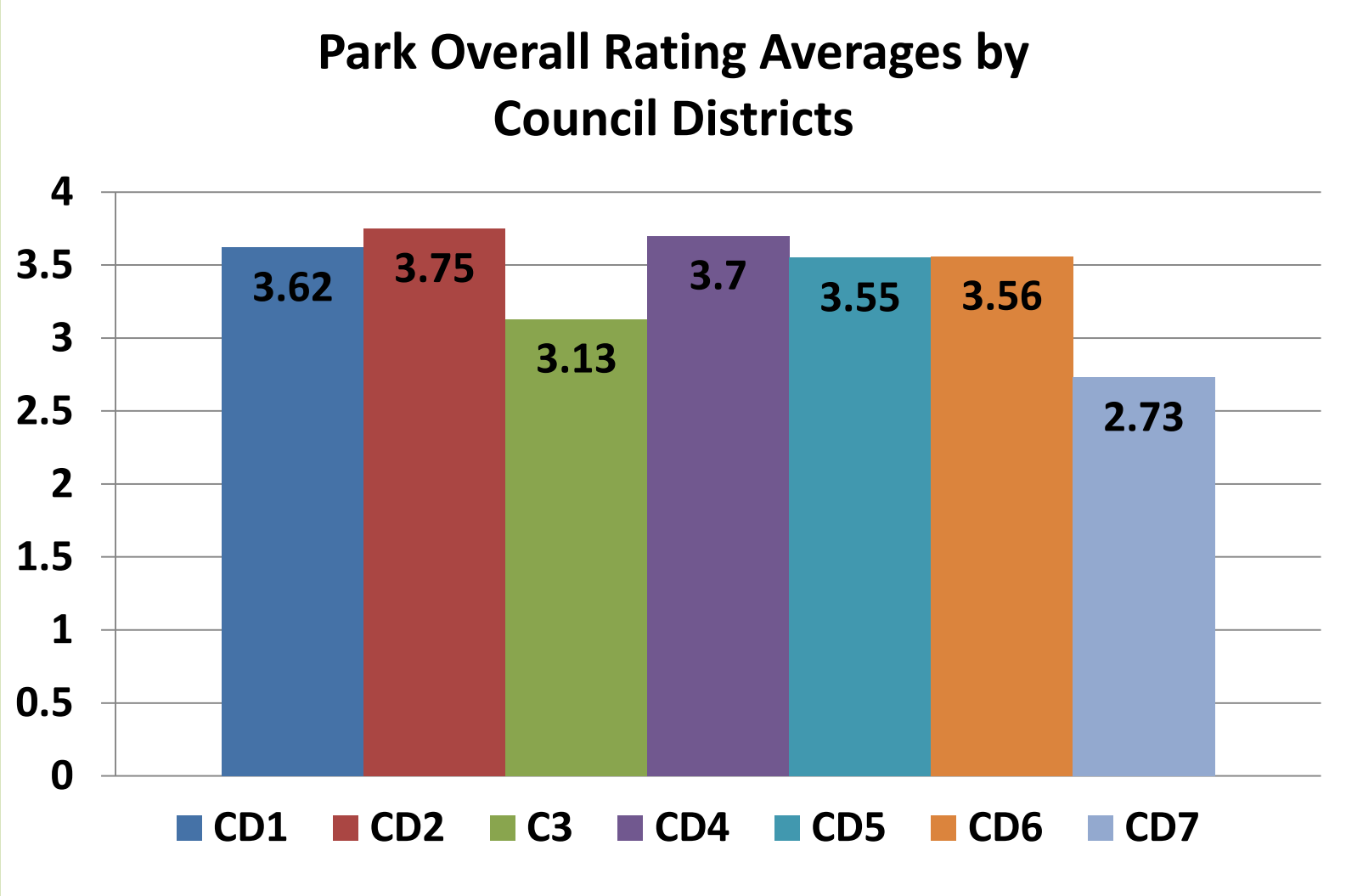
This presentation will touch on some of the findings of the written report and provide additional information on the issues raised.

We will:

1. compare park rating averages by council districts.
2. compare ratings by categories for 2014 and 2015.
3. discuss our most pressing park problems.
4. look at surveyors' top concern.
5. look at parks in jeopardy.
6. make recommendations.

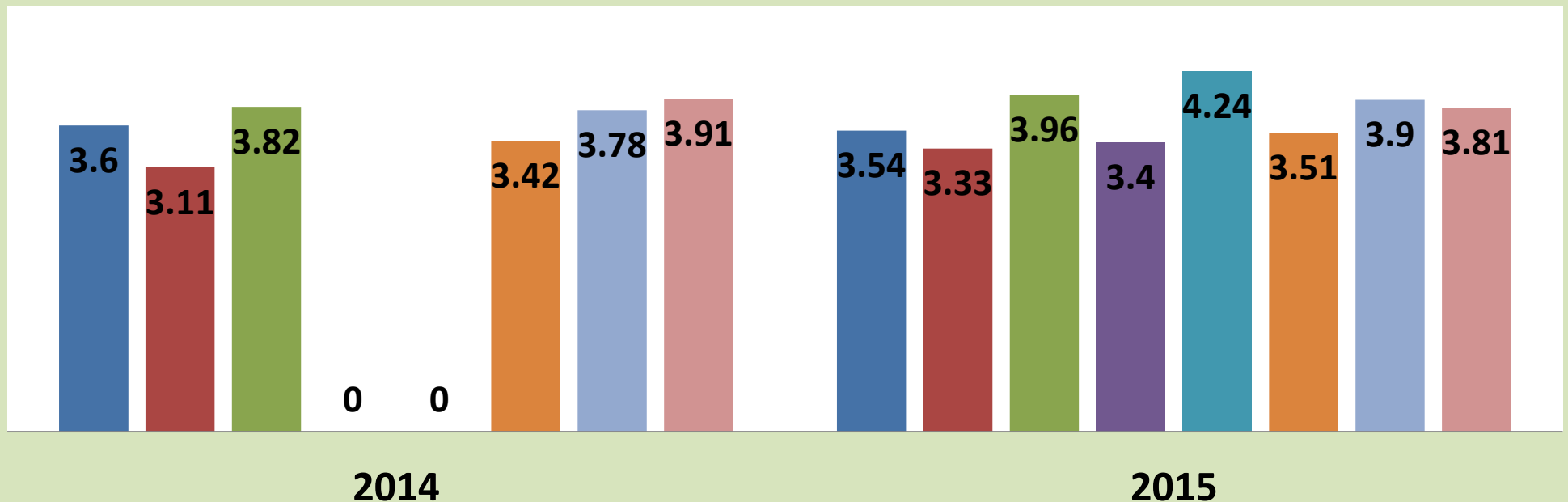


# Comparing Parks by Council Districts



# Comparing 2014 to 2015 by Categories

- From 2014 to 2015 park ratings improved slightly for Restrooms, Hardscape, Greenery, and Outdoor Sports.
- Moderate declines were seen in Picnic Areas and Children's Play
- Restrooms and Homeless ranked lowest on 2015 survey



# Restrooms Should Be A Priority

*San Antonio Park: “Women’s open, men’s closed, H2O appears turned off, toilets and floor full of toilet paper, no inside trash can, no doors, curtains removed, and bad odor coming from the men’s restroom.”*

*-Joyce Stanek and Ruth Tretbar*

*Cesar Chavez: “There is 1 restroom for each gender. The female Restroom is functioning but extremely dirty and lacking all supplies but water. The male restroom doesn’t flush well. They share a trash can that is placed outside the bathrooms. The Bathrooms smell and are littered and full of graffiti.”*

*-Victoria Herreraq*

*Ira Jinkins: “The restrooms are in great condition because in order to use the outdoor bathroom you have to have a key.”*

*-Dwayne Aikens and Mike Udkow*

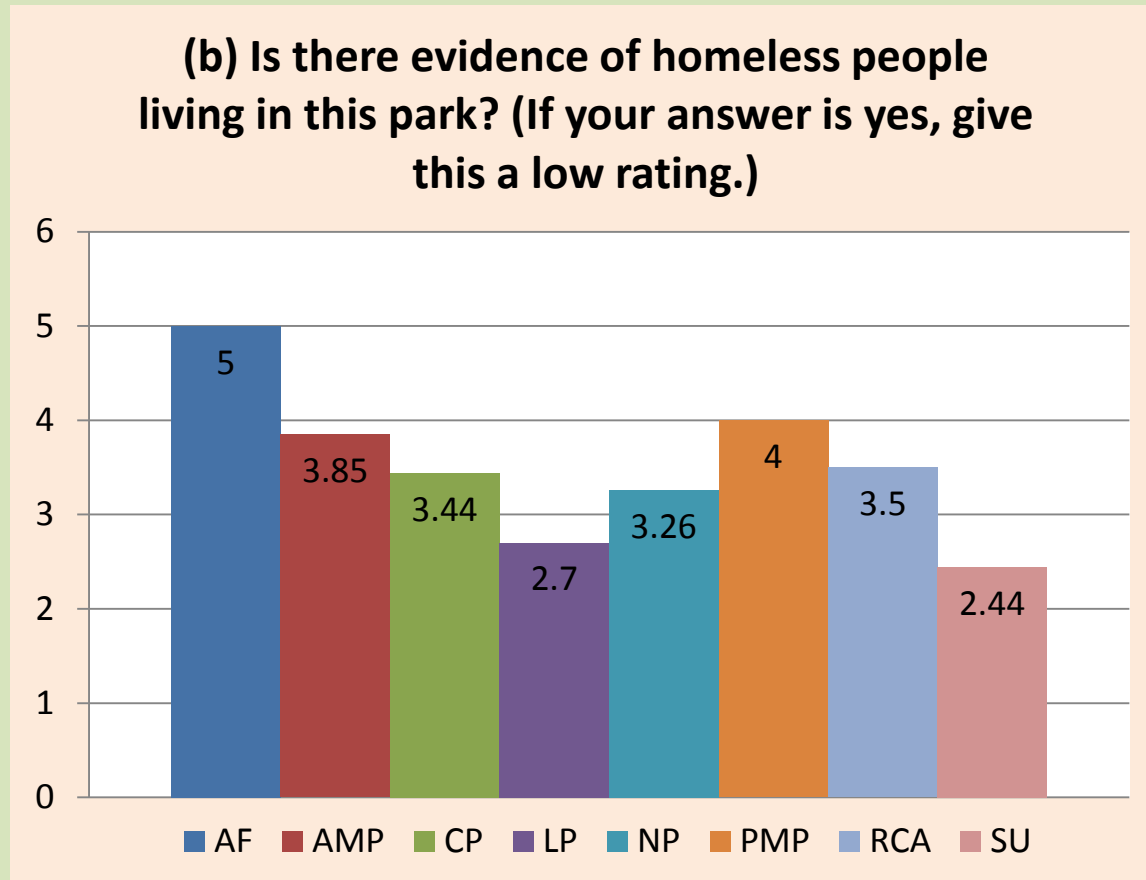


CD2-Pine Knoll



CD1-Hardy Park

# 2015 New Survey Category-Homeless in our Parks



Almost half of the 113 surveys recorded a homeless presence in the parks, with most sightings in Linear and Special Use parks.

# Our Most Pressing Problem-Homelessness in our Parks

Indicate what you observe regarding THE HOMELESS at this park. 1 = worst and 5 = best.

Answer Options	1- worst	2	3	4	5-best	N/A	Rating Average
(a) Is there evidence of homeless people using this park? (If your answer is yes, give this a low rating.)	27	9	15	9	41	12	3.28
(b) Is there evidence of homeless people living in this park? (If your answer is yes, give this a low rating.)	19	11	17	5	47	14	3.51



CD 1: FROG Park



CD3: Lafayette Square



CD7: Eula Brinson (85<sup>th</sup> Street Mini)

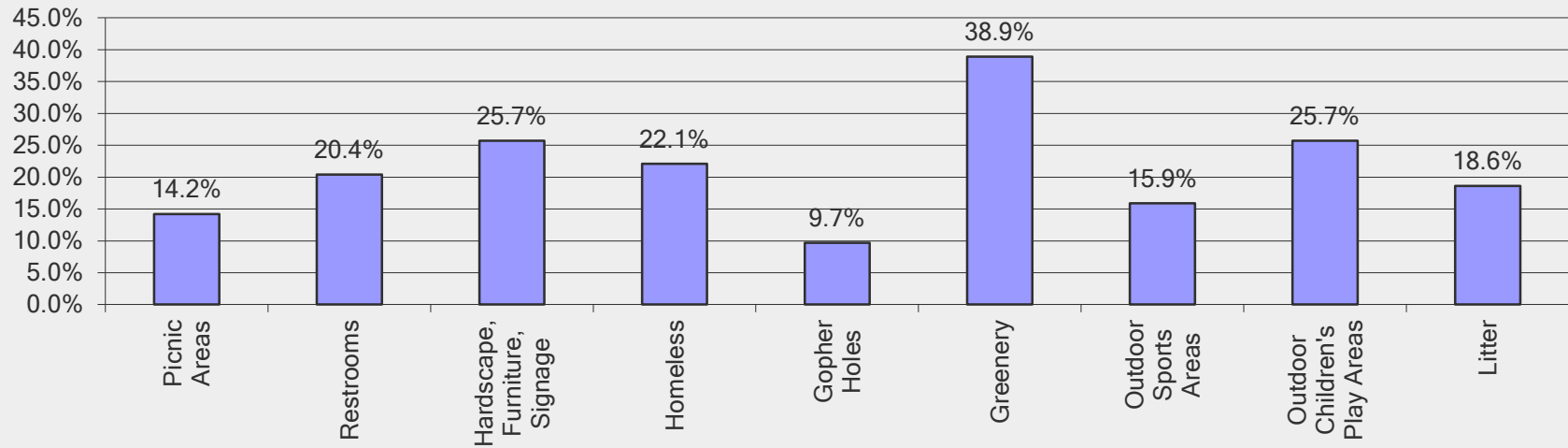
# Bring Back the Park Rangers

- The activity around homeless encampments is not compatible with safe and enjoyable use of our parks.
- Our Park Rangers were trained to deal with the homeless and they did it well, but we phased them out to save OPD jobs. Now, the burden of dealing with the homeless falls to OPW and radically cuts into their time to carry out routine maintenance.
- We understand the reasons for cutting them but circumstances have changed and it's time to bring them back.

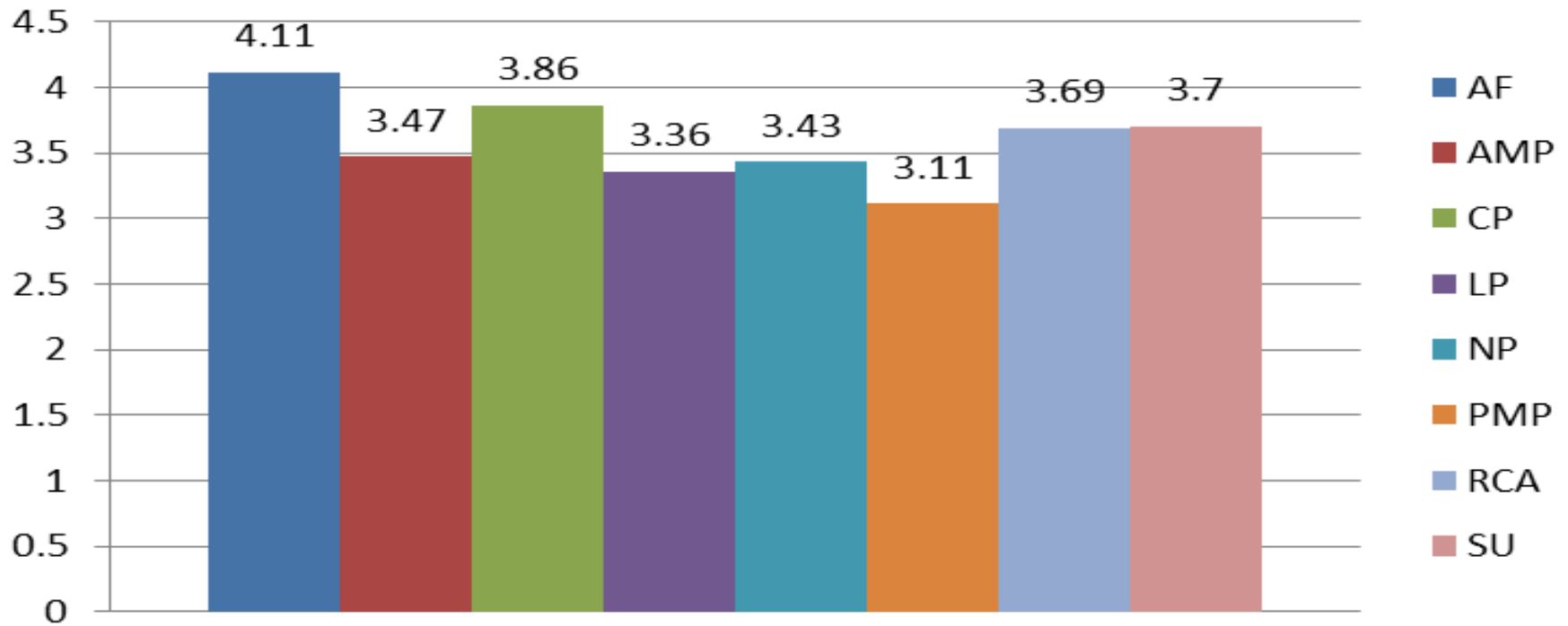
# Ongoing, but Growing Park Problems: Theft, Dumping and Vandalism

- Carter Gilmore/Greenman Field restroom, the necklace of lights around Lake Merritt, Mandela Parkway, all have fallen victim to wire theft.
- The restrooms at Arroyo and Sobrante Parks have been vandalized.
- Cesar Chavez (a recently renovated park) 160 plants were stolen and holes in the soccer field had to be repaired.
- Dumping is rampant at Union Point and Oak Port
- Homeless people have put down stakes at Lafayette Square and St. Andrews Square.

## Areas of Greatest Concern



## Greenery







# Parks Need Neighborhood Support



Oakland is indeed fortunate to have many citizens who volunteer in their parks. Some work alone, picking up litter, weeding; others establish or join neighborhood groups to conduct clean-ups. Others even build parks. The Rockridge Temescal Greenbelt (aka FROG Park) was built by over 1300 volunteers in 2001 and has been supported by volunteer workdays and generous donations ever since.

# Recommendations

- Restore Funding for Park Maintenance that has been eroded through the decades.
- Bring Back the Park Rangers.
- Provide a Long-Term Funding Solution for Maintenance of Measure DD Improvements Around the Lake.
- Find a More Effective Way to Deal with the Homeless.
- Increase Support to Neighborhood Park Groups and Stewards.
- Find New Approaches for Parks in Jeopardy.
- Stay Creative Regarding Funding for Park Maintenance.



# **OPRF Park Stewardship Program**

**Your parks need your help.**

**Become an official OPRF steward of your neighborhood park, plaza or median.**

**Visit: [www.oaklandparks.org](http://www.oaklandparks.org)**

**and sign the Stewardship Pledge.**

**OPRF offers you support and appreciation for the wonderful work you do.**