

2. Allocation of Gardener and Custodian Staff Resources

- **The Recreation and Park Department lacks the management tools to determine the number of gardener and custodian positions that it needs or how to allocate these positions to the Department's parks and recreational facilities. Consequently, the Department cannot show that it is spending its money on gardener and custodian resources in the best or most efficient way.**
- **The Department is in the process of implementing park maintenance standards as required by Proposition C, passed by the voters in November 2003, and out of these standards expects to develop productivity standards for gardeners. Two years after the adoption of Proposition C, the Department has established regular maintenance schedules for parks and completed one set of park evaluations between June of 2005 and September of 2005, but has not yet analyzed the evaluation results or released these results to the public.**
- **The Recreation and Park Department lacks a system to ensure best use of custodian resources. Although many Department facilities are open in the evening all but one custodian are assigned to the day shift. Facility cleaning occurs early in the day, when recreation directors are conducting programs, leading to problems with wet floors, closed bathrooms, and other issues.**
- **Some custodians are assigned to single recreational facilities and others are assigned to multiple facilities, depending on the size, location, type, use and condition of the facilities. Although the Department does not have data on the relative productivity of different custodian assignments, interviews with Department staff disclosed that custodians at some facilities have significant down time while other custodians are fully assigned, and that different facilities are maintained to different standards. Some facility cleaning is clearly inadequate, such as the once per week cleaning of some swimming pool locker rooms and toilets, resulting in Department of Public Health notices for inadequate cleanliness.**
- **The Recreation and Park Department needs to reassign custodians and custodial supervision, including establishing a swing shift and setting up mobile crews. The Department should also develop productivity and performance standards for custodial services and training in custodial best practices for non-custodian supervisors and custodian staff.**

Allocating Recreation and Park Department Custodian and Gardener Resources throughout the City

The Recreation and Park Department has lost custodian and gardener positions over the past two years through attrition. The Department does not yet have the management tools or oversight to evaluate the impact of these staff reductions on the Department's services and does not have a defined plan for re-allocating gardener and custodian resources. In September 2005, the Recreation and Park Department had 45.1 fewer gardeners and six fewer custodians than in August 2003. Overall, the Department had 17 percent fewer gardeners, as shown in Table 2.1. The neighborhood parks experienced the largest reduction in gardeners, from 103.27 full time equivalent positions to 76.43 full time equivalent positions, a reduction of 26.85 full time equivalent positions or 26 percent.

Table 2.1

Comparison of Actual Gardener Positions in August 2003 and September 2005

	FTEs as of August 2003	FTEs as of September 2005	Increase/ (Decrease) in FTEs	Percent Increase/ (Decrease)
Golden Gate Park (includes Golf Course)	52.60	50.00	(2.60)	(5%)
Conservatory of Flowers ¹	3.00	0.00	(3.00)	(100%)
Botanical Gardens ²	10.00	10.00	0.00	0%
Nursery	7.00	6.00	(1.00)	(14%)
Golf Courses	36.00	31.00	(5.00)	(14%)
Neighborhood Parks	103.27	76.43	(26.85)	(26%)
Urban Forestry	14.00	13.00	(1.00)	(7%)
Natural Areas	9.60	7.20	(2.40)	(25%)
Turf Management	23.00	20.00	(3.00)	(13%)
Other Citywide	<u>1.25</u>	<u>1.00</u>	<u>(0.25)</u>	<u>(20%)</u>
TOTAL	259.72	214.63	(45.10)	(17%)

Source: Recreation and Park Department

¹ The Conservatory of Flowers staffing is currently made up of nursery specialist rather than gardener positions.

² Friends of the San Francisco Botanical Gardens fund one gardener position on the condition that the Recreation and Park Department maintain ten gardener positions in the botanical gardens.

In December 2005 the Recreation and Park Department added 14 gardener positions to replace the positions lost through attrition. According to the Director of Operations, these new positions will be assigned as follows:

- Two gardener positions assigned to McLaren Park.
- Two gardener positions assigned to the Civic Center.
- Two gardener positions assigned to Dolores Park.
- Two gardener positions assigned to Golden Gate Park.
- One gardener position assigned to the Mission District.
- One gardener position assigned to the Western Addition.
- One gardener position assigned to the Richmond District.
- One gardener position assigned to the San Francisco Botanical Gardens, which will be funded by the San Francisco Botanical Gardens Society.
- Two gardener positions to Lake Merced, which will be funded by the Public Utilities Commission.

According to the Director of Operations, these gardener position allocations were determined through discussions with Department managers, based upon an analysis of the past and current deployment of gardeners and an evaluation of the current park needs. The Recreation and Park Department expects requisitions for five additional gardener positions to replace positions vacated since July of 2005 to be approved and the hiring process to begin in January of 2006, which will be allocated to the same assignments that were vacated.

The Department's Process for Planning and Allocating Gardener Resources

Proposition C and Park Maintenance Standards

The Recreation and Park Department has not previously had park maintenance standards or a method to evaluate the department's performance against such standards. Under Proposition C, passed by the voters in November of 2003, the Recreation and Parks Department is required to establish standards for park maintenance, and publish park maintenance schedules on the Recreation and Park Department web site.

In FY 2004-2005, the Controller's Office worked with the Recreation and Park Department to define park properties and facilities, establish maintenance standards, and determine gardener schedules by specific park property or facility. During this time the

Controller's Office and the Recreation and Park Department worked jointly to develop a park maintenance standards manual and evaluation tools and posted the manual on the Recreation and Park Department web site. The standards cover 14 categories of park properties and activities, including lawns, ornamental horticulture, athletic fields, playgrounds, and park restrooms. The standards do not include specialized facilities, such as golf courses and the botanical gardens, or indoor recreational facilities.

The Controller's Office also completed gardener and custodian schedules for 190 neighborhood parks and posted these schedules on the Recreation and Park Department web site. These schedules are expected to be updated quarterly.

Park Productivity Standards

Prior to Proposition C, the Recreation and Park Department has had no formal standards for park maintenance and therefore has had no systematic method to determine how many gardeners are necessary to maintain the parks. Currently, the Recreation and Park Department planning staff are defining a set of gardener tasks that support the new park maintenance standards and the horticultural task specifications necessary to maintain the parks to these standards. The Department staff are developing a park system geographic information system (GIS) database that includes (a) park locations, acreage and site-specific improvements, and (b) new City park maintenance standards, operational guidelines and standard practices by extrapolating information from park maintenance and productivity standards compiled by the National Recreation and Park Association.

According to the Director of Operations, the Department will use these new standards and practices as the benchmark guidelines for planning, estimating, organizing, and evaluating park maintenance work, and will adjust the standards over time to reflect actual field performance based on data collected by the park maintenance management information system. The Department intends to use these initial guidelines to estimate the number of full time equivalent positions needed for each park or facility to meet the desired standards. The Department has tested this approach to establishing standards at Lafayette Park and expects to have completed an evaluation of this approach by December of 2005.

The Recreation and Park Department planning staff expect to complete the initial set of productivity standards for all park landscapes and outdoor recreation facilities in January of 2006. According to the Director of Operations, these initial standards will be used to estimate staffing levels and allocation, and measure performance. The Department will look at using the productivity data to evaluate park maintenance standards developed in accordance with Proposition C and to address service gaps, propose new service strategies, and support budgetary and staffing recommendations.

Gardener Staffing for the Golf Courses, Botanical Gardens, and Natural Areas

The park maintenance standards developed by the Controller's Office and the associated productivity standards developed by the Recreation and Park Department planning staff do not include the golf courses, San Francisco Botanical Gardens, or the Natural Areas.

Because the golf course gardener positions are funded wholly by the Golf Fund, golf course revenues determine the level of staffing. The Recreation and Park Department is reviewing the distribution of gardeners among the four golf courses maintained by the City. The current Harding and Fleming Golf Courses' staffing levels have been higher than the City's typical golf course staffing levels to meet the PGA Tour, Inc.'s tournament standards.

The San Francisco Botanical Gardens have been staffed with ten gardeners and will receive one additional gardener position, which will be funded by the San Francisco Botanical Garden Society. Under an informal agreement between the Recreation and Park Department and the San Francisco Botanical Garden Society, the Department has agreed to maintain 11 gardeners in the Botanical Gardens if the Society funds one position.

The 7.2 full time equivalent gardener positions for the Natural Areas are funded by the Open Space Fund. The Natural Areas gardener work differs from other Department gardener work, emphasizing work with the Volunteer Program and knowledge of the preservation, restoration, and management of indigenous plants in their native setting.

The Recreation and Park Department needs to develop maintenance practices and gardener productivity standards for the golf courses, the Botanical Gardens, and the Natural Areas to ensure that the Department has an overall understanding of its gardening resource needs. Although some gardening positions are funded by different sources, the Department should allocate gardening resources across the Department based on productivity standards.

The Recreation and Park Department's Implementation of Proposition C Park Standards and Schedules

The Department has not yet fulfilled its charter-mandated responsibilities under Proposition C. According to the text of Proposition C, the Recreation and Park Department is required to:

... establish regular maintenance schedules for ... parks and park facilities, which shall be available to the public and on the department's website. Each such department shall monitor compliance with these schedules, and shall publish regularly data showing the extent to which the department has met its published schedules.

Although the Department has established regular maintenance schedules for parks and park facilities and posted these on its website, the results of the park evaluations are not yet published.

The Department has agreed to survey and evaluate all of its parks twice per year to determine compliance with the published standards and schedules. The Department has completed one round of evaluations of all parks during the period of June through September of 2005, although the results of this first round have not been analyzed or

released to the public. Park section supervisors and Planning Division staff performed the site evaluations to assess maintenance standards compliance. The Department intends to schedule evaluator site visits to verify gardener and custodian schedules. In addition to these two Proposition C evaluations performed every year by the Department, the Controller's Office will survey all parks annually, serving in an auditing capacity.

The Department believes that it will be able to report its Proposition C maintenance performance by January of 2006. However, according to staff in the Department, the Controller's Office has not yet trained Department staff to use the application Department of Telecommunication and Information Systems developed for updating staff schedules, and, therefore, it will be several months before such compliance reporting is feasible.

The Recreation and Park Department staff member currently tasked with managing the Proposition C implementation and coordinating with the Controller's Office is a member of the Department's long range Planning Division. Once the planning and development of the standards is completed, responsibility for the management of the park maintenance management system, maintenance standards, schedules, and compliance should be transferred to the Director of Operations.

The Department's Process for Planning and Allocating Custodian Resources

Management of custodians is currently dispersed throughout the Department. The Department has two mobile custodian crews under the supervision of two assistant custodian supervisors. One assistant custodian supervisor reports to the assistant park superintendent for quadrant 1, and is responsible for custodial services in quadrants 1 and 2.¹ The other assistant custodian supervisor reports to the vacant assistant park superintendent position for quadrant 3, and is responsible for custodial services in quadrants 3 and 4.²

The Department also assigns custodians to specific recreation or park facilities within each quadrant, who report to the respective park section supervisor. The mobile crews are responsible for providing custodial services for facilities when no custodian is permanently assigned or when the regularly assigned custodian is absent.

Lack of Department-wide Standards for Custodial Services

Responsibility for custodian services is assigned to two Neighborhood Services assistant park superintendents, the Golden Gate Park area supervisor, and two assistant custodian supervisors. Various park supervisors are responsible for on-site custodian performance in each complex, although the two assistant custodian supervisors also indirectly supervisor custodial staff. The absence of established custodial services standards reduces the ability of the custodian supervisors to manage and evaluate custodial performance. Also, except for health and safety training, custodians are not provided

¹ Quadrant 1 covers supervisor districts 5, 8, and 9, and quadrant 2 covers Supervisor districts 2, 3, and 6.

² Quadrant 3 covers supervisor districts 1, 4 and 7 and quadrant 4 covers Supervisor districts 10 and 11.

training in efficient methods or best practices, resulting in inconsistent practices across the Department.

Inefficient Custodian Staff Allocation

The Recreation and Park Department does not allocate custodian staff efficiently to ensure best results. Many Department facilities are open during the evening. With the exception of the custodian assigned to Kezar Pavilion, who works from 4:00 p.m. to 12:00 midnight, all custodians work during the day shift. According to interviews with recreation staff, facility cleaning occurs early in the day, when recreation directors are conducting programs, leading to problems with wet floors, closed bathrooms, and other issues.

Further, custodial services are not allocated evenly. Some custodians are assigned to single large recreational facilities and others are assigned to multiple facilities, depending on the size, location, type, use, and condition of the facilities. Although the Department does not have data on the relative productivity of different custodian assignments, interviews with Department staff suggest that some facilities custodians have significant down time while other custodians are fully assigned, and that different facilities are maintained to different standards.

Evaluating Custodian Assignments and Supervision

The Recreation and Park Department should evaluate custodian assignments and supervision. The evaluation should include:

- Establishment of a evening shift for custodians.
- Re-assigning Neighborhood Services custodians from facilities to mobile crews.
- Establishing a single custodian crew in Golden Gate Park.
- Creating lead positions for mobile crews and the Golden Gate Park crew.
- Establishing reporting lines to the eight Neighborhood Services Directors and the Golden Gate Park supervisor.
- Reviewing and revising the custodian job description to include green areas as well as facilities.

The Recreation and Park Department will need to work with the Mayor's Office and the Director of Human Resources to meet and confer with Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 790 to establish a evening shift for the custodians and revise the custodian job description to include green areas as well as facilities.

The Recreation and Park Department will incur new costs for establishing an evening shift and lead positions for custodians. As discussed above, some of these new costs can be offset by reducing unneeded full time recreation staff positions to part time.

Productivity, Performance and Training Standards for Custodians and Non-Custodian Supervisors

The Recreation and Park Department does not currently have productivity or general performance standards for custodial services. Although the Proposition C park maintenance standards include standards for clean restrooms, the standards do not extend to more general custodial functions. The Department needs to develop productivity and performance standards for custodians and a methodology for allocating custodian resources to facilities. Also, as discussed in Section 3 of this report, the Department should develop training in custodial best practices for non-custodian supervisors and custodian staff.

Improving Planning and Productivity for Gardeners and Custodians

The Recreation and Park Department needs to address several issues that interfere with gardener and custodian performance, including (a) improving communication through improved internet and phone access, and (b) mitigating the impact of homeless encampments on workload.

Providing Internet and Telephone Access

The Recreation and Park Department's 2003 "Information Technology Strategic Plan" states that:

... although a great percentage of the work that goes on at the Recreation and Park Department does not require a direct interface with a desktop computer, there is no justification for the Department to have been so overlooked in the past when it comes to automation. As a consequence, the Department is very 'unconnected'. This unconnected aspect contributes to communications problems, internal (management to staff) and external (department to the public)."

The Information Technology Strategic Plan recommended a survey and plan to address the telephone, voice mail, email and computer needs of the entire Department. As a result, the Department is adding voice over internet protocol systems, in conjunction with the Department of Telecommunications and Information Services, to Department facilities. In FY 2005-2006, five facilities are funded to receive voice over internet protocol systems: the Park Aid facility on Stanyan Street, the Conservatory of Flowers, the Mission Recreation Center, the South of Market Recreation Center, and the Urban Forestry facility. The Department has not yet identified additional facilities to receive voice over internet protocol systems.

The Department is also reviewing options for cell phone or radio access for mobile crews and staff assigned to remote locations. This review is still in the planning stages and the Department has not fully identified the criteria, type of access, funding or timeframe for implementing radio or cell phone access for Department staff.

During the FY 2006-2007 budget review, the Recreation and Park Department should submit to the Board of Supervisors the Department's plan for extending computer, telephone, voice mail and email access throughout the Department.

Work Order Entries via the Internet

The Recreation and Park Department recently implemented the Total Managed Asset system to manage facility work orders. As part of the implementation, the Department changed the work order procedure, requiring that routine work orders be submitted through the internet rather than called in. Interviews and focus groups with Department staff suggest that implementation of the new procedure has been awkward. Work orders are now placed through the supervisor or manager but not all supervisors have internet access nearby. According to the Department's Information Technology Manager, the Department can set up dial-up internet connections at most sites and has ten available computers to do so. The Director of Operations, in conjunction with the Neighborhood and Citywide Services Managers, needs to ensure that all supervisors have internet access at a convenient location and are trained in computer and internet use.

Mitigating the Impact of Homeless Encampments

Many Department managers and staff have expressed concern about the loss in gardener productivity resulting from homeless encampments in the parks. Cleaning up and removing homeless encampments is time consuming and can be hazardous for gardener staff. At least one work related injury has resulted from an encounter between a park gardener and a homeless person.

According to the Director of Operations, the Recreation and Park Department's primary working relationship addressing the homeless problem has been with the Police Department. The Recreation and Park Department holds bimonthly meetings with police and gardener staff and works with local police stations to facilitate park patrols.

The impact of homeless encampments in the parks is a City rather than a Department-specific problem. The General Manager should work with the Mayor and with Homeless Connect to set up a Homeless Connect parks team to address the impact of homeless encampments in the parks and to coordinate City departments' resources and services.

Conclusions

The Recreation and Park Department lacks management tools to determine if gardener and custodian resources are allocated in the best possible manner. In accordance with Proposition C, passed by the voters in November 2003, the Controller's Office has worked with the Department to develop park maintenance standards, and out of that effort, the Department is developing productivity targets. The Department needs to implement a methodology to allocate gardener resources based on a more precise assessment of facility needs, park maintenance standards and productivity targets.

The Department needs to develop standards for custodian services and ensure that custodians are assigned in a way that makes best use of custodian staffing. Currently, all but one custodian are assigned to the day shift, even though most facilities are conducting programs, preventing the custodians from thoroughly cleaning facilities. Also, custodian assignments are not necessarily evenly distributed, with some Department staff reporting that custodians at some facilities have significant down time while other custodians are fully assigned, and that different facilities are maintained to different standards.

Recommendations

The Director of Operations should:

- 2.1 Reallocate salary savings from the reduction in full time recreation staff to part time recreation staff to fund custodian staff evening shift and lead custodian positions, as discussed in Recommendations 1.4 and 1.5.
- 2.2 Direct the Neighborhood and Citywide Services Managers to develop a methodology to allocate gardener resources based on a more precise assessment of facility needs, park maintenance standards, and productivity targets.
- 2.3 Develop gardener facility maintenance and productivity targets for the golf courses, the San Francisco Botanical Gardens, and the Natural Areas.
- 2.4 Evaluate custodian assignments and supervision, including:
 - (a) Establishing an evening shift for custodians.
 - (b) Re-assigning Neighborhood and Citywide Services custodians from facilities to mobile crews.
 - (c) Establishing a single custodian crew in Golden Gate Park.
 - (d) Creating lead positions for mobile crews and the Golden Gate Park crew.
 - (e) Establishing reporting lines to the eight Neighborhood Services Directors and the Golden Gate Park supervisor.
 - (f) Reviewing and revising the custodian job description to include green areas as well as facilities.
- 2.5 Develop productivity and performance standards for custodians and a methodology for allocating custodian resources to facilities.
- 2.6 Develop training in custodial best practices for non-custodian supervisors and custodian staff.

- 2.7 Ensure that all supervisors have internet access at a convenient location and are trained in computer and internet use, in conjunction with the Neighborhood and Citywide Services Managers.

The Recreation and Park Department General Manager should:

- 2.8 Reassign responsibility for planning and complying with the Proposition C park maintenance standards to the Director of Operations.
- 2.9 Work with the Mayor's Office and the Department of Human Resources to meet and confer with Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 790 to (a) establish an evening shift for custodians, and (b) revise the custodian job description to include green areas as well as facilities.
- 2.10 Submit to the Board of Supervisors the Department's plan for extending computer, telephone, voice mail, and email access throughout the Department during the FY 2006-2007 budget review.
- 2.11 Work with the Mayor and with Homeless Connect to set up a Homeless Connect parks team to address the impact of homeless encampments in the parks and to coordinate City departments' resources and services.

Costs and Benefits

Implementation of the Budget Analyst's recommendations should result in better use of the Department's money to pay for gardeners and custodians, including better park and facility maintenance. Although the Department would incur increased costs by assigning custodians to the evening shift and establishing lead positions to manage custodians, these costs could be offset by an estimated \$118,000 in salary savings by reducing 2.0 full time equivalent recreation director positions as recommended in Section 1 of this management audit report. The Budget Analyst estimates that assigning thirty custodians to the evening shift and paying an 8 percent shift differential, plus assigning eight custodians to lead worker duty, and paying a \$5.00 per day differential, will cost approximately \$115,000 annually.