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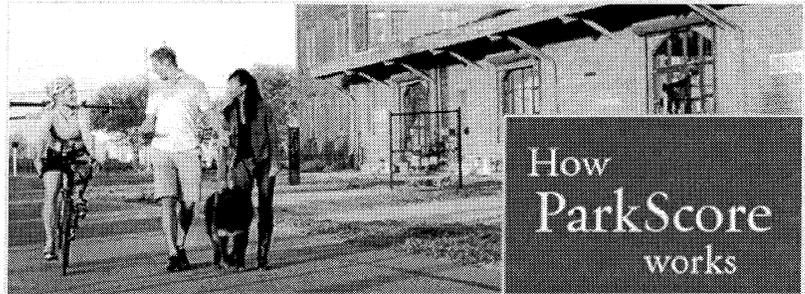
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ParkScore measures how well the 40 largest U.S. cities are meeting the need for parks.

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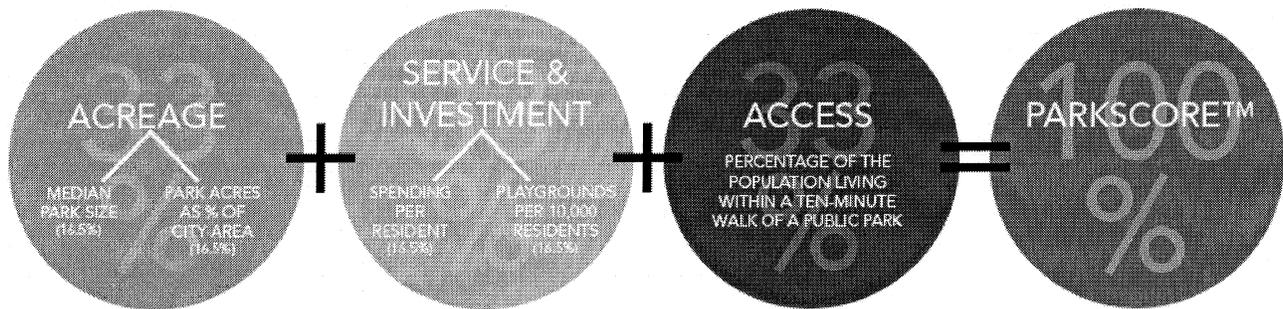
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How do I get ParkScore for my city?

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OVERVIEW

Cities can earn a maximum ParkScore of 100.

For easy comparison and at-a-glance assessment, each city is also given a rating of zero to five park benches. One bench means the park system needs major improvement, while five benches means the park system is outstanding.

In evaluating park systems, experts at The Trust for Public Land considered every publicly owned park space within the 40 largest U.S. cities—including land owned by regional, state, and federal agencies.

Our analysis is based on the three most important characteristics of an effective park system: **acreage**, **services and investment**, and **access**.

■ ACREAGE

ParkScore awards each city points for acreage based on two equally weighted measures: **median park size** and **park acres as a percentage of city area**. Factoring park acreage into each city's ParkScore helps account for the importance of large "destination parks" that serve many users who live farther than ten minutes' walking distance.

Median park size is calculated using park inventories acquired from park-owning agencies within the city. In our national sample, median park size ranges from 0.6 acres to 19.9 acres, with a median of 4.9 acres.

Park acres as a percentage of a city's area is calculated using data collected in an annual survey conducted by The Trust for Public Land's Center for City Park Excellence. In our national sample, park acres as a percent of city area ranges from 2.3 percent to 22.8 percent, with a median of 9.1 percent.

■ SERVICES AND INVESTMENT

ParkScore awards each city points for **services and investment** based on two equally weighted measures: **playgrounds per resident** and **total spending per resident**. This data is collected in an annual survey conducted by the Center for City Park Excellence.

Playgrounds are a basic amenity for any city park system. They also serve as a reliable proxy for the presence of other recreational facilities. In our national sample, playgrounds per 10,000 residents ranges from 1 to 5, with a median of 1.89.

Spending per resident is calculated from a three-year average (FY 2007–FY 2009) to minimize the effect of annual fluctuations. Spending figures include capital and operational spending by all agencies that own parkland within the city limits, including federal, state, and county agencies. In our national sample, spending per resident ranges from \$31 to \$303, with a median of \$85.

■ ACCESS

ParkScore awards each city points for **access** based on the **percentage of the population living within a ten-minute walk of a public park**. A ten-minute walk to a public park is defined as a half-mile to a public park entrance, where that half-mile is entirely within the public road network and uninterrupted by physical barriers such as highways, train tracks, rivers, and fences.

In our national sample, the percentage of the population living within a ten-minute walk of a public park ranges from 26 percent to 97 percent, with a median of 57 percent.

SCORING

The scoring system recognizes the accomplishments of cities that have made significant investments in their parks without holding dissimilar cities to an unrealistic standard. It enables detailed analysis and allows cities to increase their ParkScore through incremental improvements to different aspects of their park systems.

To determine a city's ParkScore, we assigned points in three categories: **acreage, services and investment, and access.**

- Acreage: 20 points for median park size, 20 points for park acres as a percentage of city area
- Services and investment: 20 points for spending per resident and 20 points for playgrounds per 10,000 residents
- Access: 40 points for percentage of the population living within a ten-minute walk of a public park

Points for each statistic are assigned by breaking the data range established by our national sample into 20 brackets, with the lowest bracket receiving the least points and the highest bracket receiving the most points.

Each city's total points—out of a maximum of 120—are then normalized to a ParkScore of up to 100.

OUTLIERS

To prevent outliers from skewing the results, the top bracket for each measure includes all values equal to more than double the median of the data range. For example, spending per resident in our 40-city national sample ranges from \$31 to \$303.45, with a median of \$85. Most cities spend between \$50 and \$150 per resident. To control distortion from local anomalies—such as very high spending in tourism-driven Washington D.C—all cities that spend more than double the median value (\$170 per person) are assigned to the highest bracket and receive 20 points.

With the top bracket thus defined, the parameters for the remaining brackets are established so that each bracket comprises an equal portion of the remaining data range.

This protocol applies to all categories except access, which has no outliers.

MAPPING

To map access to parks and open space, ParkScore first identifies gaps in park availability, then determines which gaps represent the most urgent need for parkland.

Access gaps are based on a service area representing a ten-minute walk (see "Access" above to learn more). To map park need, we combined three differently weighted demographic profiles:

- Population density—50%
- Percentage of population age 19 and younger—25%
- Percentage of households with income less than 75% of city median income—25%

Each city's park need is mapped from data collected in the 2010 U.S. Census.

You can find the interactive ParkScore maps on the Explore page.



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Park Score

Median Park Size (16.5% of score): The median park size is 4.9 acres with a range of 0.6-19.9 acres; the City of Menasha has a media park size of 9.23 acres. 17 points

Park Acres as % of City Area (16.5% of score): The median area is 9.1% of total city area with a range of 2.3%-22.8%; the City of Menasha has a park area of 4.5%. 5 points

Spending Per Resident (16.5% of score): The median spending is \$85 with a range of \$31-\$303, this also includes cities with high levels of tourism thus the majority of cities spent between \$50-\$150 per person; The City of Menasha spends on average (using 07', 08', 09' Park Spending) \$52.68 per person. 4 points

Playgrounds Per 10,000 Residents (16.5% of score): The median playgrounds per 10,000 people is 1.89 with a range of 1-5; the City of Menasha has 6.34 playgrounds per 10,000 people with a total of 11 playgrounds for 17,353 people. 20 points

Access (33%): The median % of population within a 10 minute walking distance is 57% with a range of 26-97%; the City of Menasha has 92.73% of the population within a 10 minute walking distance. 40 points

Park Score is $86/120 = 72$. This score based on other cities with a 72 score, would yield 4 Park Benches out of 5

Population Within a 10 minute Walking Distance of a Park

