



TRUST FOR
PUBLIC
LAND®

Connecting everyone to the outdoors™

Elevating access

Lessons learned from TPL's efforts to protect
urban and community green spaces

Photo: Joe Martinez



PS 156 Waverly and LS 392 - Brooklyn, NY

Access to the outdoors is a
**fundamental human need
and essential to our health
and well-being.**

PEOPLE NEED PARKS AND GREEN SPACES



But great parks aren't created equal.
**Today, one in three people,
including 28 million children,
don't have a park or green space
within a 10-minute walk (half mile)
of home.**



Communities that value and invest in
**OUTDOOR ACCESS
FOR ALL ARE...**



HEALTHIER



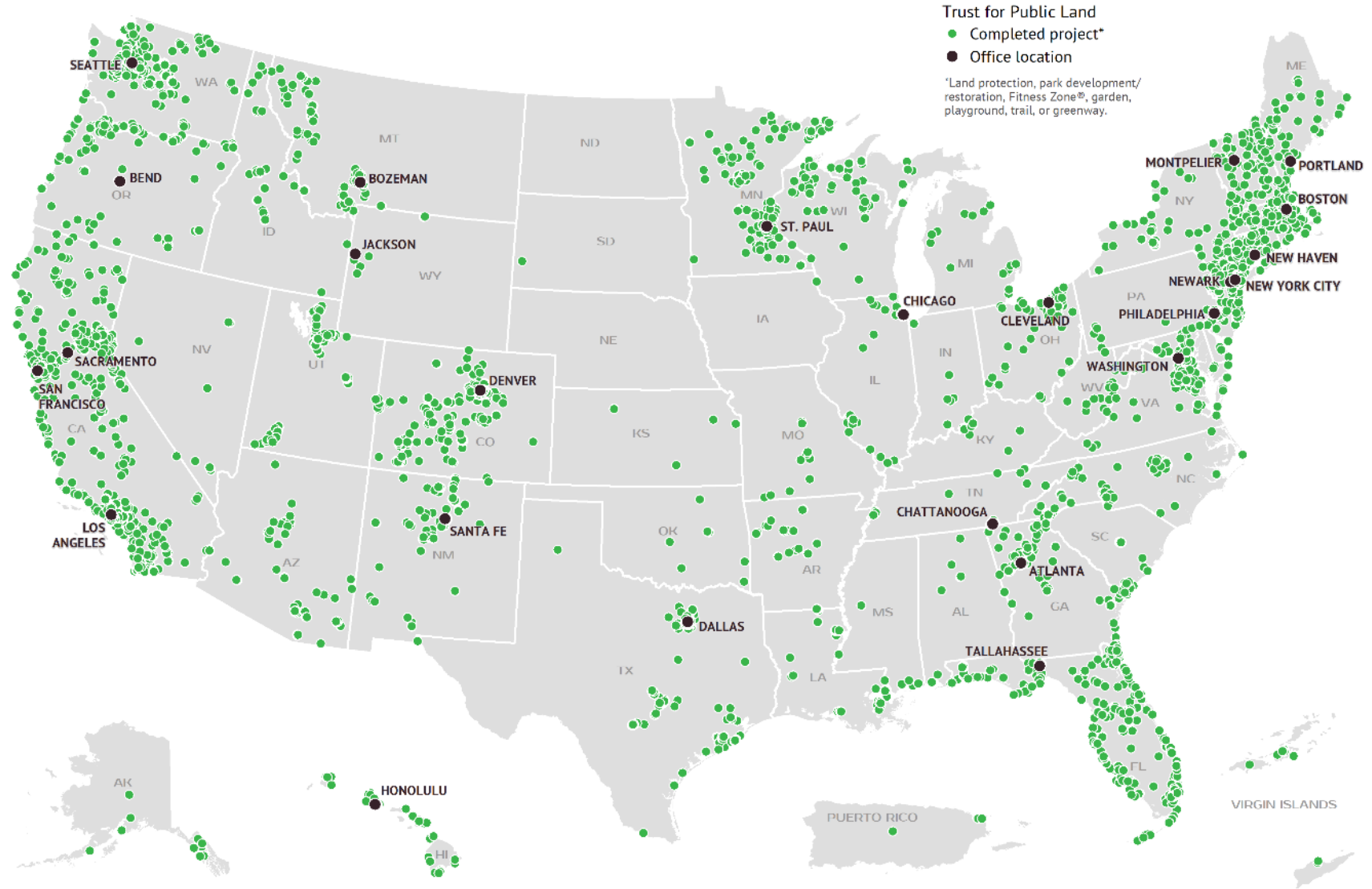
MORE RESILIENT



MORE INCLUSIVE

NATIONAL FOOTPRINT. LOCAL IMPACT.

Completed Projects
1973 – December 2025



GOALS OF PRESENTATION

WHAT SPACES COUNT

For 10-minute walk, we've developed criteria for parks and park-like spaces – our analogue to '**community greenspace**'

DOES IT COUNT?

A game

PROXIMITY TO PEOPLE

The 10-minute walk makes explicit how we measure proximity to people – our analogue to '**urban**'

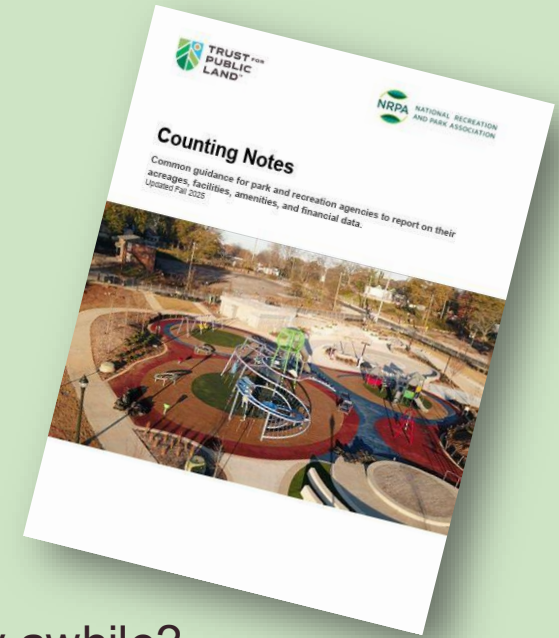
DATA PROCESSING PIPELINE

Practical tools and tips we've developed from updating every year across the 100 most populous cities

WHAT TYPES OF SPACES COUNT

To include in 10-minute walk, a site must:

- ✓ **Be outdoors**
- ✓ **Be a named destination** and advertised on agency website
- ✓ Encourage **informal public use** (e.g. is public encouraged to walk through and stay awhile?)
- ✓ Encourage at least one **‘park-like’ activity**:
 - Socializing
 - Play or exercise
 - Enjoy nature



CONTEXT SPECIFIC DEFINITION

Used in context of supporting creation of places for people to enjoy

Public Access

- Excludes protected lands that restrict access even if conservation benefit
- Don't require public ownership – private spaces w/ public access count (e.g. churches, land trusts, HOAs)
- Do include schoolyards open for community use after hours (even though restricted hours to public)

Type of Space

- Largely want to defer to community on what works for their needs, so fairly flexible criteria
- We don't require “green” space – e.g. plazas, sport fields count
- Importance of being a destination / worthy of a name – as opposed to greening streets or open space

These are specific to the goals of the 10-Minute Walk campaign – it is not intended as a

GOLF COURSES



Randolph Dell Urich Golf Course
Tucson, AZ



Rock Creek Golf Course
Washington, DC

Named place

Advertised on website



Informal public use

Can anybody walk through and stay awhile?



Yes – around perimeter



No – golfers only

Park-like activities

e.g. socializing, play/exercise, enjoy nature



STREETSCAPES



Murals



Boulevard Median
Chicago, IL

Named place
Advertised on website



No – unnamed

Informal public use
Can anybody walk through and stay awhile?



Park-like activities
e.g. socializing, play/exercise, enjoy nature



No – no seating



TRAILWAYS



Bike lanes
Anywhere, US



Paseo Del Bosque
Albuquerque, NM

Named place

Advertised on website



No – unnamed



Informal public use

Can anybody walk through and stay awhile?



Park-like activities

e.g. socializing, play/exercise, enjoy nature



OPEN SPACE



Auten Nature Preserve
Mecklenburg, NC



Drainageway 68
Greensboro, NC

Named place

Advertised on website



No – unnamed & unadvertised

Informal public use

Can anybody walk through and stay awhile?



No – not yet open to public



Park-like activities

e.g. socializing, play/exercise, enjoy nature



CEMETERIES



Arlington National Cemetery
Arlington, VA



Spring Grove Cemetery
Cincinnati, OH

Named place

Advertised on website



Informal public use

Can anybody walk through and stay awhile?



Yes, includes mapped walking trails

Park-like activities

e.g. socializing, play/exercise, enjoy nature



No, explicitly restricts running, eating



COMMUNITY SCHOOLYARDS



Locked Schoolyard
Anywhere, USA



PS 156 Waverly and LS 392
New York, NY

Named place
*Formal joint-use agreement or school district policy documented
City & school district willing to advertise as public on website*



No formal public access policy



Informal public use
*Can anybody walk through and stay awhile
outside of school hours?*



No, explicitly closed to public



Yes, explicit signage with hours

Park-like activities
e.g. socializing, play/exercise, enjoy nature



PRIVATELY MANAGED SPACES (e.g. HOAs)



Featherstone HOA



Central Park HOA

Named place

City & private manager is willing to advertise park as public on website
City attests meets same maintenance and quality standards



Named, but not able to advertise as public

Informal public use

*Can anybody **legally** walk through and stay awhile?*
No restrictive signage or within gated communities



No, explicitly private signage

Park-like activities

e.g. socializing, play/exercise, enjoy nature



CLASSIFYING NATURAL VS DESIGNED

	Natural	Designed
Purpose	Managed for conservation and ecological value	Created, constructed, planted, and managed primarily for human use.
Features	<div>Only basic park infrastructure:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bathrooms• Parking• Seating• Trails</div> <div>(Ok to have associated facilities like nature centers or maintenance facilities)</div>	<div>Other amenities such as:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Play areas• Sport fields and courts• Picnic areas• Special uses – golf, skate parks, etc.</div>

Excludes undeveloped facilities (e.g. open space) that don't meet core criteria

NATURAL ACREAGE vs. DESIGNED ACREAGE

These sites meet all the
criterion for natural acreages



Louise Howard Park
Atlanta, GA



Higgins Beach
Scarborough, ME

Management Purpose

For conservation and ecological value



Defer to agency judgement call

Designed Infrastructure

Only basic park infrastructure



Meets criteria for park-site

i.e. public access



NATURAL ACREAGE vs. DESIGNED ACREAGE

These sites do not meet all the criteria of natural acreage, and should be classified as designed acreage



Rock Creek Golf Course Washington, DC
Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Center Dallas, TX

Management Purpose

For conservation and ecological value



No – primary purpose is golf



Designed Infrastructure

Only basic park infrastructure



No - Specialized gardens

Meets criteria for park-site

i.e. public access



MEASURING PROXIMITY TO PEOPLE



4M

ACRES
PROTECTED

Equivalent of 2M
acres protected
lands goal



5,504

OUTDOOR SPACES
CREATED



9.7M

PEOPLE
CONNECTED TO
THE OUTDOORS

10-minute walk of
all projects



\$111B

SECURED IN
PUBLIC FUNDING

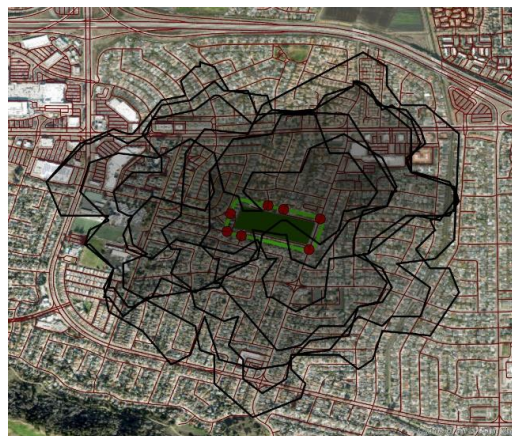
CALCULATING 10-MINUTE WALK



Public Space



Access points

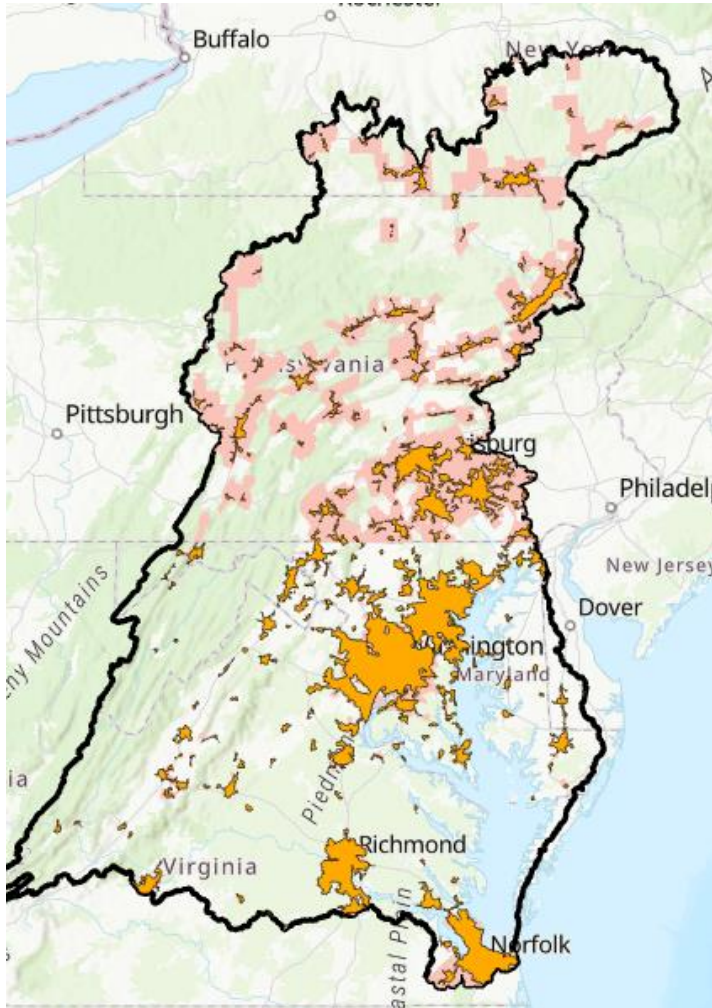


“Walkable” routes



“Walkshed”

TWO OPTIONS FOR MEASURING ACCESS



Chesapeake Bay watershed urban areas

In the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, urban areas contain:

79% of population (14.7M of 18.6M)

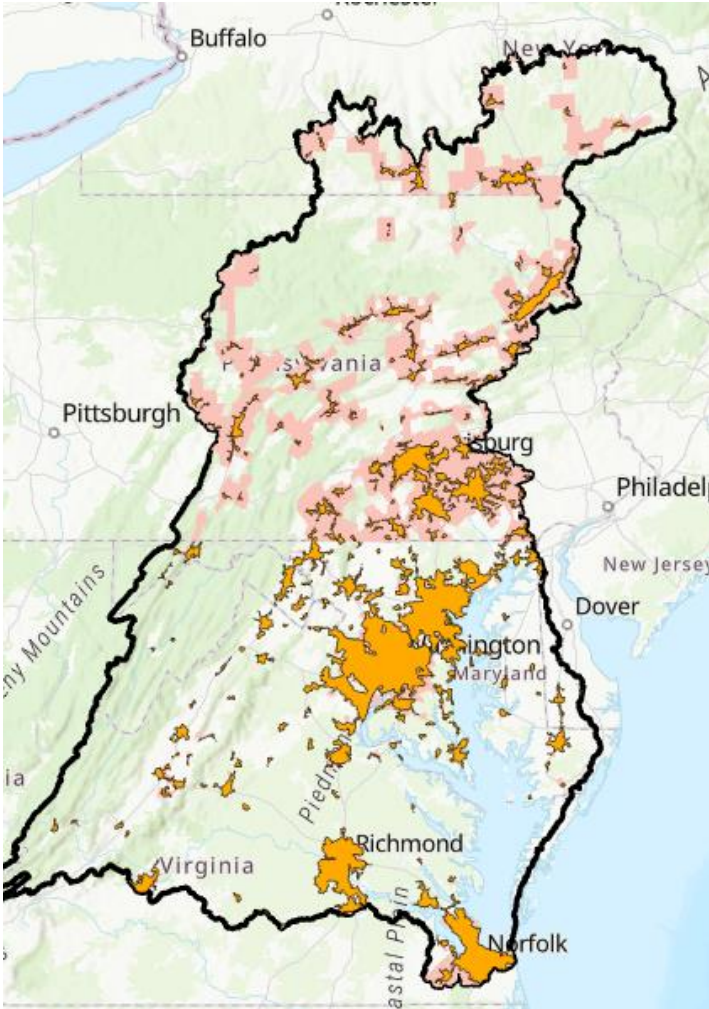
8% of land area (3.4M acres of 42.5M)

3% of protected lands (.3M of 9.1M acres)

About 2/3 are publicly accessible

8.8M of the 14.7M urban area residents (60%) live within a 10-minute walk of a publicly accessible protected land

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Option 1 **3%** of protected lands (.3M of 9.1M acres)

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Option 2 **8.8M** of the 14.7M urban area residents (60%) live within a 10-minute walk of a publicly accessible protected land

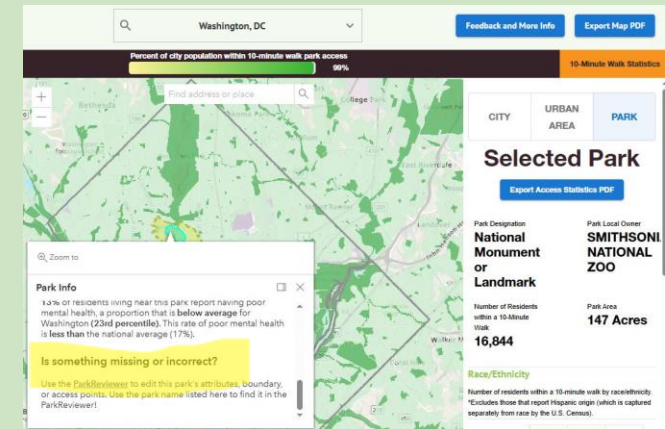
PARKSCORE DATA PROCESSING PIPELINE

ParkScore® Index GIS Data Schema
Fall 2023

Guidance:
The following table lists the required and desired attributes of parks and greenspace data submitted in the ParkServe schema. All layers can be shared as either a shapefile (.shp), the geodatabase (.gdb), layer package (.lpx), map package (.mxd), or as a shared web service. If your data is stored across multiple layers, please combine into a single layer using 'Facility_Category' to identify each layer if possible, or specify relevant layers below. To help make sure we are fully incorporating your data, please specify your agency's corresponding field name in Column F. See the domain tab for specific field category choices - while these are not yet required, we do appreciate any help mapping your field domain categories to the ones in the schema. See the Examples tab for examples of common facility types. See the park inclusion tab for what parks and park-like facilities should be included.

Field Name	Description	Required	Agency Field Name (Please provide)
Facility_Category*	Specify the general facility category: parks, natural areas, special-use, schoolyards, trails/greenways or streetscapes/open space	YES	
Facility_Type	Agency-defined facility type (e.g. neighborhood park, golf course, preserve, drainage/swamp)	Optional	
Park_Designation*	Designation type (PAD-US schema)	YES	
Park_Name	Park Name	YES	
Park_Local_Owner	Name of entity responsible for site's management	YES	
Park_Local_Manager	Owner type (e.g. city, non-profit, utility)	YES	
Park_Owner_Type*	Owner type (e.g. city, non-profit, utility)	Optional	
Park_Manager_Type*	Status field indicating if facility is open, undeveloped, or closed	Recommended	
Park_Status*	Status field indicating if facility is open, undeveloped, or closed	Recommended	
Park_Land_Acquisition*	Indicates how the site was acquired (e.g. purchase, easement, etc.)	Recommended	
Park_Estimate*	Year opened	Recommended	
Park_Address	Street Address	Yes if providing custom access points	
PercentNaturalArea	Estimated percentage of facility that is managed natural area. OK to estimate in increments of 0%, 25%, 50%, 75%, and 100% (Most will be either 0% or 100%)		
Park_UID	Unique identifier that pins custom access points to their corresponding park feature		

*Domained field please refer to domain list for all options



Data Request

- Standardize schema (PAD-US)
- Agencies submit & self-attest to meeting criteria
- ~60 of the 100 biggest cities provide updates each year

TPL Staff Verification

- Review access in Google Street View for edge cases
- Auto-calculate access points

Public Verification

- Media of annual ParkScore Index invites public scrutiny
- Published on ParkServe where anybody can review

MAINTAINING DATA IS IMPORTANT (AND HARD)

