



**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** August 19, 2008

**TO:** Karen Mauney-Brodek, Planner, Planning Division, SFRPD

**FROM:** Elizabeth Gee, Superintendent, Neighborhood Services, SFRPD

**RE:** Restroom Task Force Report-Issued for Assistance to the Clean and Safe Neighborhood Parks Bond Restroom Program

**Restroom Task Force  
San Francisco Recreation & Park Department (SFRPD)**

The SFRPD Restroom Task Force was comprised of representatives from various perspectives within SFRPD, as well as a consumer advocate perspective from the Neighborhood Parks Council(NPC). The Task Force was a working group which met from the Fall of 2006 to the Winter of 2007 and committee members worked on varying duties and responsibilities in between meetings. The first-ever “Consumer Restroom Survey” was established, which gathered approximately 500 respondents. In addition to other information, survey results contributed towards short-term and long-term efforts to improve restroom facilities.

Long-Term Efforts: Restroom Planning, Design, Prototypes and Construction Materials and Equipment Specifications address future capital projects/improvements with features and standards which will improve the maintenance requirements and ease of access issues for maintenance staff. Maintenance Yard leadership participation in the Task Force increased probability of successful implementation of standards and guidelines as they respond to issues at current facilities. There is great desire to consider environmentally preferred methods, such as high efficiency hand dryers, which may aid us in solving other related problems (i.e. vandalism, litter and garbage removal).

Short-Term Efforts: A draft of Restroom Maintenance Standards and Operations Plan was developed to determine effective maintenance of our current restroom facilities. Efforts over the past 2 years include the re-organization of the Neighborhood Services Division into 9 Neighborhood Service Areas which has increased the direct response time to emergency situations. Additional Custodial Staffing was added in October, 2007 when SFRPD hired approximately 30 additional new custodians and custodial supervisors, bring us closer to the number identified to address the maintenance of the restroom facilities only. We have, also, implemented unannounced quarterly “Restroom Compliance Checks” in each Neighborhood Service Area, and continue to do so on a quarterly basis. Finally, restroom rating is included in our Proposition C Park Maintenance Standards.

Restroom Task Force membership:

**Name/Title:**

Elizabeth A. Gee (Chair), Neighborhood Services Manager, SFRPD  
 Ramiro Rodriguez, Asst. Custodial Supervisor, SFRPD  
 James Threat, Neighborhood Services Manager, SFRPD

**Dates of Participation:**

Oct. 2006 - Dec. 2007  
 Oct. 2006 – Dec. 2007  
 Oct. 2006 – Dec. 2007



Terrence Daniel, Senior Personnel Analyst, SFRPD	Oct. 2006 – Dec. 2007
Dan Mauer, Project Manager, SFRPD	Oct. 2006 – Jan. 2007
Marvin Yee, Project Manager, SFRPD	Jan.2007 – Dec. 2007
Steve Flannery, Structural Maintenance, SFRPD	May 2007 – Dec. 2007
Alfredo Pedroza, Parkscan Coordinator, NPC	Oct. 2006 – Mar. 2007
Wolfram Alderson, Deputy Director, NPC	Mar. 2007 - Jul. 2007
Emily Utter, Program Specialist, NPC	Jul. 2007 – Oct. 2007
Meredith Thomas, Stewardship Program Manager, NPC	Oct. 2007 – Dec. 2007

**Findings**

In addition to its meetings, the Restroom Task Force utilized interviews, presentations and web-based information gathering to identify and develop an approach to address the issues around the maintenance of the SFRPD public restroom facilities. It was apparent that the Department, as well as its patrons, have endured a long struggle to staff and adequately maintain our restroom facilities. At the time the Restroom Task Force began its work, the SFRPD employed 52 custodians to service system-wide restrooms, as well as the indoors of recreation centers and playgrounds and a variety of hardscape areas. We are able to somewhat gauge misuse in our restrooms by responses and incidences of vandalism and graffiti (of which there is a lot), but have found it difficult to determine basic use patterns by members of the general public. Most importantly, this current situation of perpetual inappropriate use, misuse, and abuse of this public amenity debilitates our ability to adequately assess the resources necessary to address the “normal wear and tear” on particular facilities due to everyday normal use. The Restroom Task Force developed the first-ever “Consumer Restroom Survey”, which gathered approximately 500 respondents. The findings from this survey, as well as information provided to us from the “Survey of San Francisco Park Users, Spring, 2007”, released by the Office of the Controller-City Services Auditor, were instrumental in understanding park user experience and to gather opinions regarding restroom facilities, assessing general use patterns and gauging public perception and expectations.

**Consumer Restroom Survey:**

Approximately 500 park users participated in the survey in 2007. Participants were asked to respond to questions about park visits, restroom facility use, concerns regarding safety, maintenance, and availability in addition to preference of certain restroom features.

The following outline the major outcomes of the Restroom Task Force Consumer Restroom Survey.

***Park Use***

- The majority of respondents (81%) are using parks for playgrounds, athletic fields or passive recreation.
- 78% of respondents visit a SFRPD park facility at least weekly
- 72% of respondents’ park visits are between 30 minutes and 2 hours

***Restroom Use***

- 36% of respondents use park restrooms rarely
- 33% of respondents use park restrooms weekly
- 84% of respondents would use a park restroom between 10am-6pm
- 67% of respondents indicated that they feel safe using park restrooms overall

***Restroom Condition and Availability***



- 45% of respondents indicated that availability or condition of a park restroom always or often is a factor in the length of their visit
- Only 9% of respondents indicated that restroom availability and condition are never a factor and all other replies fall in between
- 50% of respondents indicated that they avoid a restroom facility due to hygiene, availability or safety
- 60% of respondents noted that overall, when they have wanted to use a restroom facility it was unlocked and open for use
- 58% of respondents indicated that there were not adequate supplies available in park restrooms overall.
- Respondents rated their overall restroom facility experience as follows:
  - 1% excellent
  - 5% good
  - 33% acceptable
  - 36% unpleasant
  - 25% very unpleasant
- 38% of respondents believe that the lack of availability is the biggest problem with park restrooms
- 42% report that cleanliness is the largest problem.
- 66% of respondents believe restrooms should be open 7 days a week
- 87% of respondents believe baby changing tables should be available

#### ***Restroom Safety***

- 22% of respondents indicated witnessing or encountering illegal activity in restrooms
- Example of activities witness include:
  - Drug use
  - Drug paraphernalia
  - Prostitution
  - Graffiti
  - Loitering/homelessness
  - Vandalism
- Generally, most park users did not report the illegal activity and of those who did, to whom they reported it varied greatly from SFPD to gardening and recreation staff and park patrol staff.
- 75% of those who reported illegal activity felt unsatisfied with the response
- 80% of those who reported illegal activity do not feel the problem was resolved

#### **Survey of San Francisco Park Users, Spring, 2007:**

The Controller's Office, City Services Auditor conducted an intercept survey in selected City parks between April and May, 2007 to characterize park users and measure direct perceptions about their park experience. Twenty-nine parks were visited and 1,363 completed responses were received from 2,647 park users who were approached and asked to fill out a questionnaire. While this survey was directed towards gauging attitudes and beliefs about general aspects of parks, the Restroom Task Force found this document useful in its work.

The following outline the major outcomes, pertaining to the Restroom Task Force, of the Survey of San Francisco Park Users, Spring, 2007:

#### ***Park Use***



- The most common reasons to visit a park is the convenience of its location (65%), landscaping/greenery (33%) and the children's playground (32%). Fourteen percent indicated that availability of restrooms was a factor (which placed it in the lower third of the list)
- Households with children are more sensitive about restrooms availability when choosing a park.
- 60% of park users visit the park at which they were surveyed once a week or more during the dry season (April-October). 63% report visiting other city parks (than the one they were surveyed at) at least once a month.
- 37% of users report spending up to 2 hours on site when they visit a city park.
- The most common time frame for park usage was 12Noon-4pm on weekdays (49%) and weekends (43%)

#### ***Restroom Condition and Availability***

- Among park features that need improvements, availability and condition of the restrooms were the most frequently cited (67%), followed by general cleanliness (23%)
- While restrooms remain a significant factor of concern about parks, ParkScan findings indicate this might be decreasing over time. The ParkScan.Org 2006 Year End Report, a product of the Neighborhood Park Council (NPC), found fewer concerns over the condition and cleanliness of restrooms compared to previous years.

#### ***Restroom Safety***

- While the survey did not address restroom safety specifically, it did address safety in terms of the general park experience. A majority of survey respondents (67%) said that they felt very safe during their park visit, while only six percent felt unsafe or very unsafe.

#### **Information from Benchmark Cities, Presentations, etc.:**

The Restroom Task Force gathered information through interviews, speaker presentations and web-based information gathering pertaining to the challenges, best practices and resource allocation/management associated with the operation and maintenance of public restroom facilities.

The following outline the major outcomes of the sources of this other information:

#### ***Restroom Condition and Availability***

- In general, a majority of SFRPD restroom facilities are old, worn and often times dilapidated to the point where some of the perceived uncleanliness is permanently stained sections of the facility.
- In a significant number of cases, the vandalism which occurs in restrooms is perpetual and ongoing, requiring repeated work orders for the same request (i.e., various large and small foreign objects flushed down toilets and sinks)
- For a number of years, the Department has been deficient in the number of custodians to adequately service the amount of restrooms which we operate, as well as a number of other personnel (Park Patrol, gardeners, recreation staff) working suitable work schedules in order to accommodate the opening, closing and scheduled servicing of restrooms during reasonable hours of park usage.
- The wide varieties of equipment and fixtures which exist in different restrooms have proven difficult for maintenance personnel to adequately stock inventory and effectively and efficiently respond to work requests.
- Most responses from Benchmark Cities (Seattle, San Jose, Portland) indicated use of the Annual Performance Planning and Appraisal tool to confirm expectations and measure compliance with maintenance standards.



### ***Restroom Safety***

- Benchmark cities (Seattle, San Jose, Portland) cited similar challenges in addressing illegal activity. Examples of the type of illegal activities include:
  - Drug use
  - Drug paraphernalia
  - Prostitution
  - Graffiti
  - Loitering/homelessness
  - Vandalism
- Short of hiring Restroom Attendants, approaches to these challenges were similar to those of San Francisco.

### **Recommendations**

During the Fall of 2007, the San Francisco Recreation & Park Department was in a unique position to take advantage of two presented opportunities to begin addressing the challenges facing it in terms of Restroom Maintenance and Restroom Design. One was an opportunity to increase the custodial workforce and implement a more direct and responsive organizational structure; the other was to seek bond funding to repair/replace the RPD existing stand-alone restrooms.

Current custodial staffing levels had been minimal, with no backfill coverage available when custodial crew is out. In October, 2007, SFRPD hired approximately 30 additional new custodians and custodial supervisors. Deployment and structure was as follows:

The custodial operations structure includes an Asst. Custodial Supervisor to oversee custodians in each Neighborhood Service Area to increase oversight and consistent adherence to performance standards. The San Francisco Recreation and Park Department's current employment of approximately eighty-three custodians and ten Assistant Custodial Supervisors are responsible for the maintenance of restrooms at recreation centers, clubhouses, parks, McLaren Lodge and other facilities throughout the Department. In addition to the maintenance of restrooms, these individuals must also maintain buildings and grounds. These duties include but are not limited to the following:

- performing routine cleaning tasks;
- maintaining interiors of buildings, other facilities and surrounding areas;
- maintaining recreational areas and specific exterior areas of buildings such as parking areas, ramps and sidewalks;
- cleaning playground areas;
- cleaning and removing graffiti from non-painted surface such as tile, windows, signage and bathroom partitions;
- operating scrubbers, buffers, wax applicators, burnishes, carpet extractor, pressure washer and other electrical, gas and manually operated appliances and equipment;
- removing disposable waste materials from premises;
- assisting in moving and arranging of furniture and equipment as needed;
- washing interior glass, wall partitions and interior and exterior windows;
- caring for custodial tools, equipment and supplies;
- securing buildings as required; and
- performing related duties as needed



With the increase in the custodial work force, the Department has been able to expand its maintenance coverage of facilities, with a variety of work shifts. In the past, the majority of the custodians worked a Monday – Friday shift, from 6am – 2:30pm. The new plan allows each Neighborhood Service Area, along with Golden Gate Park, to operate with three shifts:

Shift 1: Mondays – Fridays, 6am – 2:30 pm

Clean and open assigned restrooms;

Clean recreation centers, clubhouses, play areas, etc.

Shift 2: Mondays – Fridays, 2:30pm – 11pm (swing shift)

2 co-workers work as a crew;

Clean and lock restrooms;

Clean play areas, recreation centers and clubhouses, detailed cleanings, special projects.

Shift 3: Thursdays – Mondays, 6:30am – 3:00pm (weekend coverage)

May work as a crew or single;

Open restrooms, clean where needed and lock at end of day;

Clean recreation centers, clubhouses, play areas;

Weekend events.

The additional custodial staff has allowed the Department to implement a Mobile Crew, as well, working Thursdays-Mondays.

#### **Restroom Maintenance Standards for Custodians:**

Establishing work goals and expectations is important so that staff know what is expected of them and how their work performance will be measured. The Recreation and Park Department has incorporated the use of SMART goals as a method to clearly communicate work performance goals and expectations. SMART goals refer to the following:

Specific (unambiguous, clearly defined, exactly what the employee should do)

Measurable (evidence that the objective was completed)

Achievable (realistic)

Relevant (addresses key projects and developmental needs)

Time framed (starting and ending points)

A custodian's overall work performance depends upon how efficiently they use their available time. Of course, custodians are often responsible for cleaning other areas in addition to restrooms. The custodian's supervisor should determine the schedule, frequency and thoroughness that a restroom should be cleaned based on the restroom's use, other tasks that are assigned to the custodian, and other business needs. The expectations or goals that the supervisor establishes should be communicated to the custodian before their work is measured against such standards.

Measuring a custodian's work performance for cleaning restrooms is often assessed best soon after a custodian has cleaned a restroom due to varying peak periods of use. Although the cleanliness of a restroom may change depending on the volume of use, it is easy to detect optimal cleanliness from unsatisfactory work performance. The following standards may be used as guidelines or checklists for establishing, communicating and assessing work performance goals and expectations for custodians in regard to cleaning restrooms:



- The restroom should have a clean appearance overall, have a fresh scent, and there should be no odors attributable to custodial neglect.
- The floors should be spotless and not soiled or sticky, free of any urine, gum or other spills/litter.
- Walls and partitions should be free of soil and any removable markings.
- Mirrors should not be dirty, contain any streaks, and should have a bright shine.
- Restroom fixtures should be disinfected and have a bright shine; chrome, especially, should have a bright shine.
- Dispensers should be clean and filled.
- Trash receptacles should be clean and empty.
- Toilets should be free of any scum or deposits on the inside lip, bowl or toilet seat.
- Urinals should be free of streaks, water deposits or deposits on inside lips.
- Sinks should be free of any built up scum in bowl or on ledges.
- Other ledges should be free of accumulated dirt and/or litter.
- Any inoperable lighting or other fixtures should be reported to the custodian's supervisor immediately.

Clearly communicating goals and expectations and providing regular constructive feedback to the custodian about his or her work performance helps the Recreation and Park Department provide clean and sanitary restrooms for the public, park patrons and fellow employees.

Restroom hours and scheduled cleanings will be posted at each restroom site, determined by individual Neighborhood Service Area, and based upon available data/surveys indicating usage and traffic patterns and current staffing levels. The schedule will ensure:

- ❖ That the restrooms will be opened and closed, per the posted hours of operation.
- ❖ Provision of Daily tasks: Regular Maintenance
  - Cleaned and serviced at least twice a day
  - Clean everything top to bottom
  - Disinfect and sanitize
  - Restock supplies
  - Trash removal
- ❖ Provision of Weekly Tasks: Thorough Cleaning
  - Regular maintenance
  - Cleaning dispensers
  - Cleaning stained toilet bowls and urinals
  - High dusting
- ❖ Provision of Monthly Tasks: Deep Cleaning
  - Regular maintenance
  - Removing soils
  - Cleaning drains
- ❖ Timely reporting of maintenance problems
  - Timely reporting of graffiti
  - Compliance with the Department of the Environment (DOE) Best Practices

**Custodial Supplies:**

- Broom (all types)
- Appropriate Broom Handles
- Dust pans



- Garbage Cans
- Trash Cans
- Trash Bags and liners
- Mop Heads
- Mop Handless
- Wringers
- Mop Bucket
- Paper towels
- Toilet paper (rolls – flat)
- Toilet Brush
- Johnny Mop
- Toilet seat covers
- Soap (hand)
- Cleaning solutions
- Bleach
- Degreaser
- Sand sifter
- Graffiti remover
- Glass cleaner
- Rags
- Floor Wax
- Under Seal
- Wax pad
- Buffer
- Wet-Dry Vacuum
- Three and one oil
- Hand Scrubbing Brush
- Scraper
- Blower
- Pick-up stick
- Caution signs
- Dust Mask
- Safety Glasses
- Gloves (latex & rubber)

### **Restroom Design Standards**

Recognizing the marginal condition of the majority of the restrooms, the Recreation & Park Department is addressing the capital requirements of this plan by the inclusion of the repair and/or renovation of stand-alone restrooms and the complete facility renovations of playgrounds and recreation facilities which include restrooms incorporated into buildings. The Restroom Task Force has developed design standards to guide plans in design so that restrooms are built to decrease maintenance challenges, optimize efficiency of maintenance resources and address ease of access issues for maintenance staff. The Planning and Design Standards are broken up into four different categories: Stand-Alone Restrooms, Public Restrooms in Buildings, Restricted-Use Restrooms, and Non-Permanent Restrooms. These draft standards shall be taken into consideration for the repair, renovation, and replacement of the park's restroom facilities.



### Next Steps

The October, 2007 increase in custodial positions was based upon analysis of an ideal staffing level in order to address the custodial duties pertaining to outside areas and restrooms ONLY of all San Francisco Recreation & Park Department (SFRPD) facilities. Further analysis must be made to determine optimal staffing levels to include the interior building space of all SFRPD facilities, including aquatics facilities and city-wide destination points.

Establish commitment from RPD Capital Division to include design standards in all future restroom designs in order to promote fixture/product uniformity, environmental consciousness and maximum resource allocation in terms of future maintenance.

Neighborhood Service Area leadership to promote adherence to Maintenance Standards in normal course of work and by incorporating standards and expectations into Performance Planning and Appraisal Reports (PPAR) process (i.e., develop annual goals and objective for routine maintenance (daily, weekly, monthly, annual); develop consistent goals/vision, shared among Neighborhood Service Areas and guided by findings regarding usage patterns.

Post consistent signage to inform the public about the hours of restroom availability, when and how often serviced (use usage patterns as a guide) and contact phone number.

SFRPD Planning Division to assume the oversight of the Clean and Safe Neighborhood Parks Bond Restroom Program Committee, with consideration of the findings and recommendations of the SFRPD Restroom Task Force.