

# Local Parks Maintenance Program

## Staff-Scored Criteria Information

### Background

The Washington State Legislature directed the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) to distribute funding for the Local Parks Maintenance (LPM) program on a “needs-based set of criteria.” In addition, a recent equity review of RCO’s recreation grant programs recommended increasing the use of objective criteria to help support more equitable distribution of grants. Also, deferred maintenance is a universal problem across diverse local parks agencies, so RCO expected many applications with similar scopes of work.

To align with legislative direction on need, incorporate recent equity recommendations, and provide discernment among projects, RCO chose to approach project evaluation for LPM very differently than it does for most other programs. Firstly, RCO included two different indicators of “need” that were scored by staff based on publicly available quantitative information: *Social Vulnerability* and *Local Low-Income*. Secondly, these staff-scored criteria accounted for 50 percent of the points available to applicants. Finally, the point tiers for staff-scored criteria were created to provide a significant variation in points across different entities.

The result of this approach meant that “needier” jurisdictions (i.e., those with multiple social vulnerabilities and low median household incomes relative to the surrounding area) may tend to rank higher than others. **Relative to other RCO programs, this also means that more points are outside of the applicant’s control and very similar scopes of work can have very different final scores depending on their locations.** To promote transparency and constructive dialog about project ranking, below is a more detailed summary of the *Social Vulnerability* and *Local Low-Income* indicators, how they were scored, and links for applicants to explore the data for their jurisdictions.

### Social Vulnerability (10 pts)

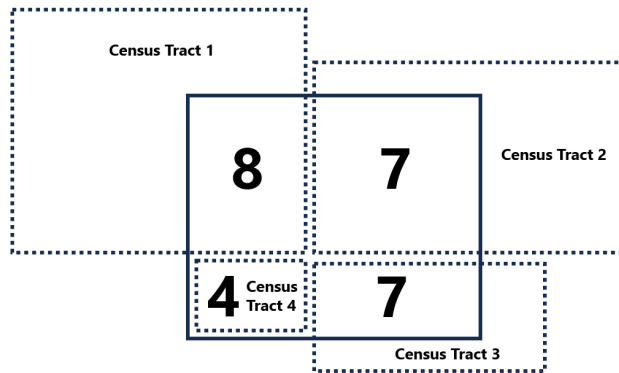
The Social Vulnerability Index is a score between one and ten that has been assigned to every census tract in Washington by the Washington State Department of Health. The [map](#) may be found online after selecting the “Social Vulnerability Index” tab on the left of the screen.

The index represents a composite score that is based on several different quantitative factors including household composition, disability, housing, transportation, race/ethnicity, language, education, and employment that serve as a collective proxy for “social vulnerability.” Census tracts that have a Social Vulnerability Index of ten are the most socially vulnerable while those with an index of one are the least socially vulnerable. A higher index results in a higher score for LPM.

## How Will Projects Be Scored?

**Tier 1/Multi-Site Applications:** Because Tier 1/Multi-Site projects may involve work at multiple parks across an organization’s service area, the index scores for all the relevant census tracts in the service area were weighted and then averaged to determine the applicant’s score.

Census Tract	SVI Score	% of Jurisdiction
1	8	25
2	7	40
3	7	25
4	4	10
<b>Weighted Average</b>		6.95
<b>Final Score</b>		7



*Example: A small city has four census tracts that overlap in its jurisdiction to varying degrees, with index scores ranging from 4 to 8. The weighted average index of census tracts in the jurisdiction is 6.95, so the applicant would receive a total rounded score of 7 out of 10 for this question. See above for a hypothetical map and calculation for this example.*

**Tier 2/Single Site Applications:** Because Tier 2/Single Site projects only involve work at one park site, the index score for the census tract that includes the park will be used to determine the score for LPM.

*Example: A small city applied to do work at a park in a census tract that has a Social Vulnerability Index score of 7. The applicant would receive a total score of 7 out of 10 for this question.*

### Local Low Income (10 pts)

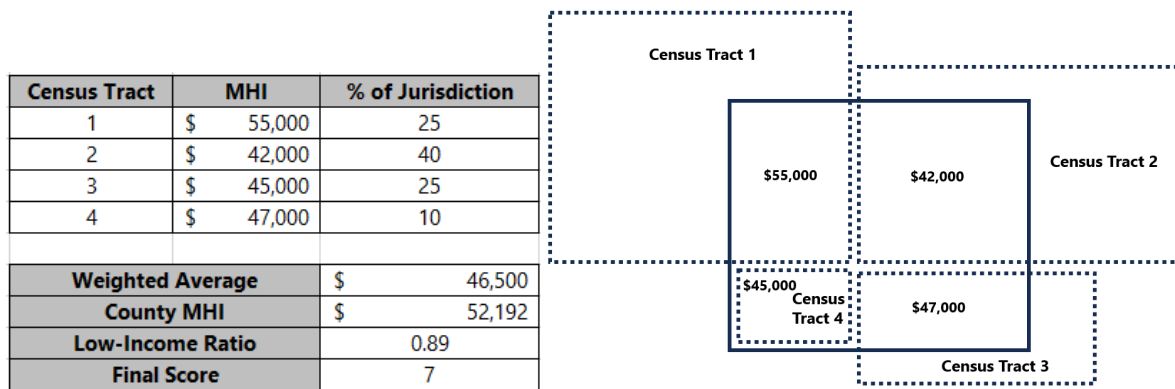
The Department of Revenue collects information on median household income for all the census tracts in Washington, as well as for each county and the state. This [income information](#) may be explored online at the Washington Tracking Network maintained by the Washington State Department of Health. Select the level of the median household income data (census tract, county, or state) in the “Selection Criteria” tab, click the green “Submit” button, and then select the “Map” tab (last of four tabs) that appears on the main screen.

RCO compared these different levels of median household income in certain ways to determine a “local low-income ratio” that corrects for large variations in wages and cost of living around the state. This local low-income ratio describes the extent to which a group of people has a higher or lower household income than the areas around it and serves as a proxy for financial need for the purposes of LPM scoring. Applicants were scored from 0 to 10 based on ten different tiers of local low-income ratio (see page 22 of [Manual 27](#) for a description of the tiers),

ranging from less than 0.6 to more than 1.5. The higher the local low-income ratio, the lower the score for LPM.

## How Were Projects Scored?

**Tier 1/Multi-Site Applications:** Because Tier 1/Multi-Site projects may involve work at multiple parks across an organization’s service area, the median household income scores for all the relevant census tracts in the service area were weighted and then averaged to determine a representative median household income for the jurisdiction. If the multi-site applicant is a city, town, parks and recreation district, special facilities district, or tribe, then the average median household income was compared to the county median household income to get the “local low-income ratio.” If a multi-site applicant is a county or port district, the average median household income was compared to the state median household income to get the “local low-income ratio.”



*Example: The applicant (a small city) has four census tracts in its jurisdiction with median household income ranging from \$42,000 to \$55,000. The weighted average median household income of those census tracts is \$46,500, which is 0.91 times the county median household income of \$52,192. Based on the scoring tiers provided in the LPM manual, the applicant would receive a total score of six for this question. See above for a hypothetical map and calculation for this example.*

*Example: The applicant (a county) has a median household income of \$41,939, which is 0.59 times the state median household income of \$70,116. Based on the scoring tiers provided in the LPM manual, the applicant would receive a total score of ten out of ten for this question.*

**Tier 2/Single Site Applications:** Because Tier 2/Single Site projects only involve work at one park site, the median household income for the census tract that includes the park was compared against the county median household income to determine the local low-income ratio that determines the applicant’s score for LPM.

*Example: The census tract where the project is located has a household median income of \$101,417. This is 1.47 times the county median household income of \$69,023, so the applicant would receive a total score of one out of ten for this question.*