



Stamford ParkScore Index ®

July 2023

Overview

The ParkScore® index is the most comprehensive rating system developed to measure how well the 100 largest U.S. cities are meeting the need for parks. Across the country, more than 100 million people—including 28 million kids—don't have a park within a 10-minute walk of home. Among the 100 largest U.S. cities, residents in neighborhoods of color have access to 44% less park space than those in white neighborhoods. Trust for Public Land (TPL) applied the ParkScore Index ® methodology to Stamford's park system to identify its strengths and weaknesses relative to the 100 most populous U.S. cities, as well as a peer city of New Haven.

The ParkScore index measures how well Stamford compares against the nation's most populous cities on measures across 5 categories reflective of an excellent city park system: Acreage, Access, Investment, Amenities, and Equity. The Acreage and Access categories reflect the importance of both large 'destination' parks as well as ensuring all residents have access to a public park within a short 10-minute walk of their home. The Investment and Amenities categories reflect the importance of high-quality parks – the spending needed to maintain them and a wide range of activities available for multi-generational user groups. The Equity category reflects the importance of ensuring park resources are fairly distributed between neighborhoods within a city.

For each measure, points are awarded on a relative basis, based on how a city compares to the 100 most populous cities. For example, a score of 90 could be interpreted that Stamford is among the top 10% of cities for that measure. The score for each of the five categories is an average of its measures; a city's overall rating is an average of the five categories. The measures are selected to facilitate comparison across a wide-range of cities.

44

out of 100
points

Overall Score

Based on our analysis, Stamford's park system received a ParkScore rating of 43.8 out of a possible 100 points, indicating that it ranks slightly below average when compared to the most populous cities in the country. Stamford ranks above average for the percentage of its population within a 10-minute walk of a park. It also ranks above average for equity, with high park access and acreage numbers for communities of color and low-income neighborhoods. The city performs more poorly on its acreage, amenities, and investment, indicating that although most residents live within a walkable half-mile, there is room to increase the range of activities available at parks, to increase park size, and to invest more in parks.

20

out of 100
points

Acreage

1,064 acres of parkland (4% of city area), median park size of 3 acres

The acreage score indicates the relative scarcity of large 'destination' parks, which include large natural areas that provide critical mental health as well as climate and conservation benefits. This category is scored as an average of two metrics, parkland as percentage of city area and median park size. Stamford scores in the bottom fourth of cities reviewed in ParkScore for both metrics.



Access

71% of Stamford residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park

The access score indicates the percentage of a city's residents that live within a walkable half-mile of a park – the average distance that most people are willing to walk to reach a destination. In Stamford, 71% of its residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park, making the city slightly above average for ensuring residents have access to at least one close-to-home park.



Investment

An average of \$70 per person is spent on parks and recreation in Stamford each year

The investment score indicates the relative financial health of a city's park system, which is essential to ensuring parks are maintained at a high level for all to enjoy. This category is scored based on the total parks and recreation spending per person across all agencies and organizations, including monetized volunteer hours. With a score of 22 points (\$70 per resident per year), Stamford ranks below most cities in terms of sufficient spending to maintain its parks at a high level.



Amenities

13 basketball hoops, 3 dog parks, 19 playgrounds, 2 senior and rec centers, 31 restrooms, and 3 splashpads

With a score of 43 points, Stamford ranks slightly below average in terms of providing key amenities that drive the park usage necessary for residents to enjoy the full range of benefits parks can offer. Of the six amenities, Stamford ranks among the nation's best in terms of splashpads, restrooms, and dog parks and one of the lowest for basketball hoops.



Equity

In Stamford, 82% of people of color live within a 10-minute walk of a park, as do 85% of low-income households. When comparing park space per person, neighborhoods of color have access to slightly more park acreage than white neighborhoods. Low income neighborhoods have 39% less than high-income neighborhoods.

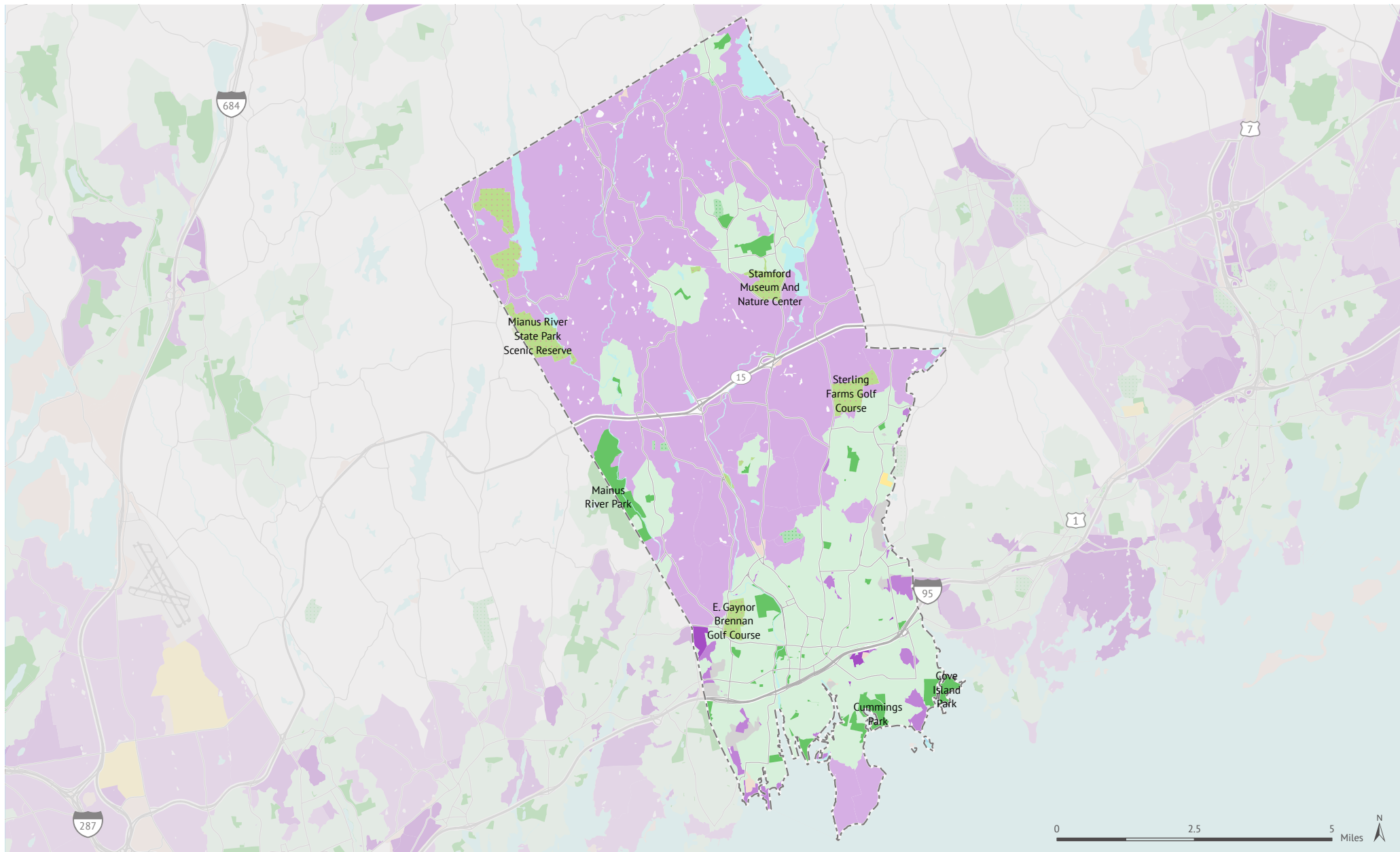
The equity score indicates how fairly parks and park space are distributed within a city. This category is an average of two types of metrics: 1) the percentage of people of color and low-income households within a 10-minute walk of a park and 2) a comparison of the amount of park space between neighborhoods by race and income. Stamford performs well in most of these metrics. People of low and low income households have higher 10-minute walk access than the city-wide average, and neighborhoods of color have a higher amount of park space per person than white neighborhoods. However, low-income neighborhoods have a lower amount of park space per person than high income neighborhoods.



Stamford Custom ParkScore Maps

Park Access (Map 1): This map highlights areas within the city that are further than a walkable half mile (“10 Minute Walk”) from a publicly accessible park.

Park Equity (Map 2): These maps highlight the difference in available park space per person among low-income and high-income block groups in Stamford, as well as between block groups that are majority people of color or white.



Park access

STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT

This analysis is provided via the ParkServe® mapping application, which identifies the population living within a 10-minute walk of a park by creating dynamic 1/2-mile service areas (10-minute walking distance) for all public parks. In this analysis, service areas use the street network to determine walkable distance (streets such as highways, freeways, and interstates are considered barriers).

In Stamford, 71% of the population lives within a 10-minute walk of a park. Among the remaining 39,295 people without access to a nearby park, Trust for Public Land suggests **where to prioritize the development of new parks** to reduce this gap. This prioritization is based on a comprehensive index of six equally-weighted demographic and environmental metrics:

- Population density*
- Density of low income households (households with income less than 75% of the urban area median income; less than \$100,000 in Stamford)*
- Density of people of color*
- Community health (a combined index based on the rate of poor mental health and low physical activity from the 2022 CDC PLACES census tract dataset)
- Urban heat islands (surface temperature at least 1.25 degrees greater than city mean surface temperature from Trust for Public Land, based on Landsat 8 satellite imagery)
- Pollution burden (air toxics respiratory hazard index from 2022 EPA EJScreen)

*Based on 2022 Forecast block groups provided by ESRI

Priority areas for new parks
(outside of 10-minute walk service areas of parks with public access)

- Very high priority
- High priority
- Moderate priority

Park with public access

- Other park

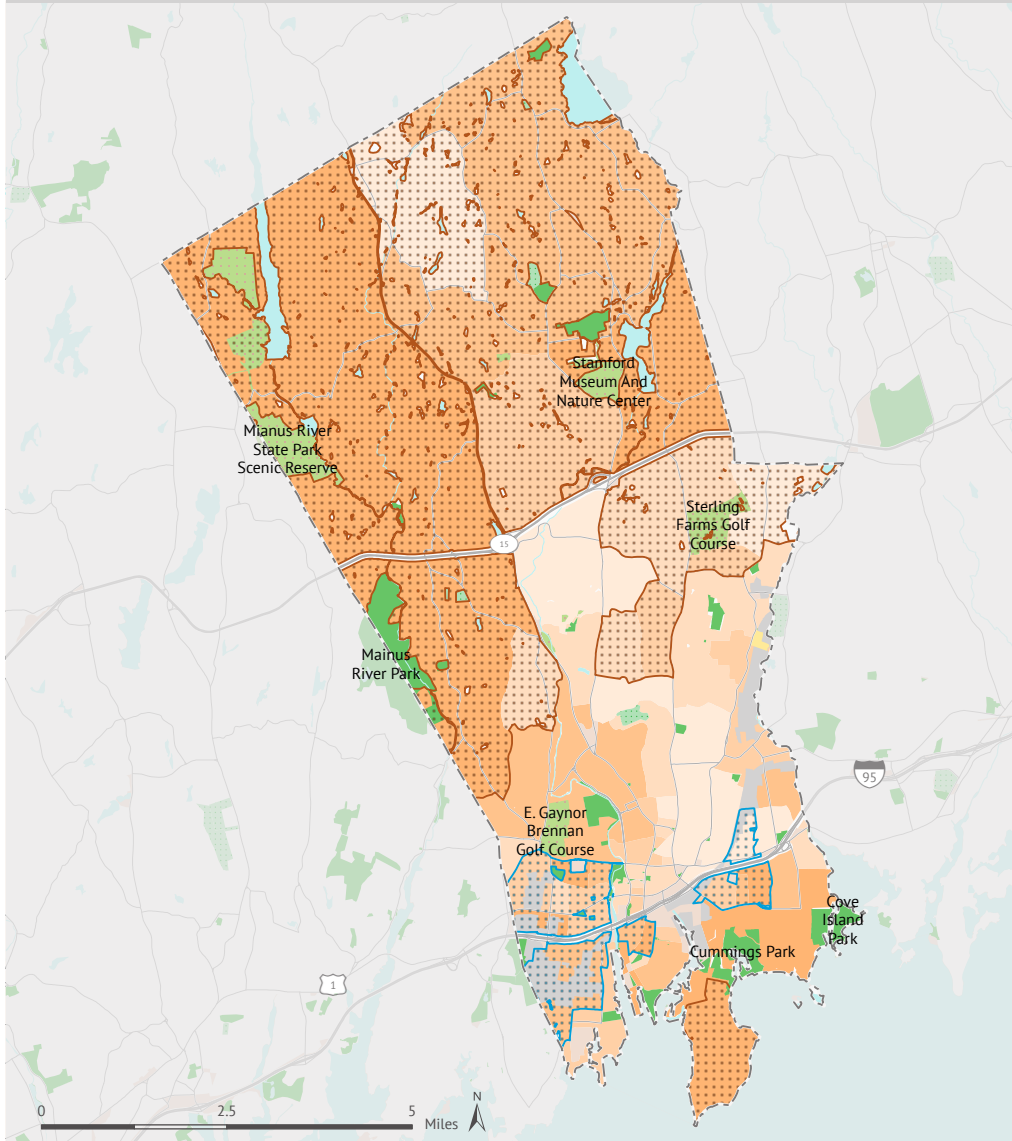
10-minute walk (half-mile) service area of park with public access

- Cemetery
- University
- Industrial
- Vacant zero population area
- City boundary
- County boundary

Special thanks to the following data providers: Stamford, Local Design, Esri, OSM, CDC, EPA. Information on this map is provided for purposes of discussion and visualization only. Map created by Trust for Public Land on August 4, 2023. Trust for Public Land and Trust for Public Land logo are federally registered marks of Trust for Public Land. Copyright © 2023 Trust for Public Land. www.tpl.org

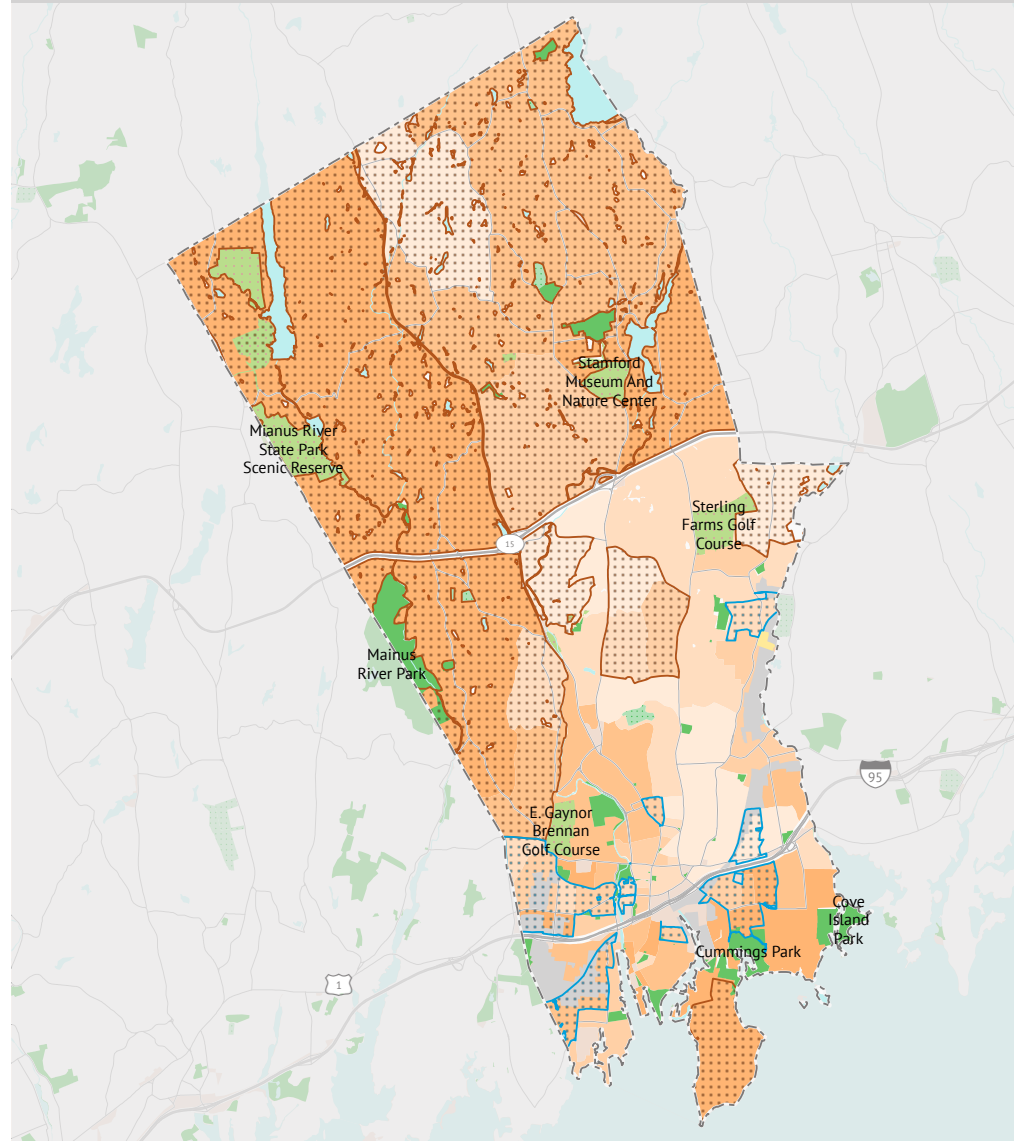
Race

 Block Group with higher % of **people of color**
 Block Group with higher % **white** population



Income

 Block Group with higher % of **low-income** households
 Block Group with higher % of **high-income** households



Park equity

STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT

In Stamford, residents in neighborhoods of color have access to 13% more park space per person than those in white neighborhoods. Residents in low-income neighborhoods have access to 39% less than those in high-income neighborhoods.

Park space per person effectively measures the available park space within a 10-minute walk of a micro-neighborhood, identified as those with the highest concentrations (top 20% of all census block groups in a city) of people of color or white population and high-income or low-income households. Households with income less than 75% of city median income (less than \$100,000 in Stamford) are considered low-income; households with income greater than 125% of city median income (greater than \$150,000 in Stamford) are high-income.

The metrics for people of color reflect each of the Census-designated race/ethnicity groups: Black, Hispanic, and Indigenous and Native American, Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, multiple races, and other communities of color. Demographic profiles are based on 2020 Forecast block groups provided by Esri.

- Park with public access
- Other park
- Cemetery
- University
- Industrial
- Vacant zero population area
- City boundary
- County boundary
- Park acres per person**
- Very high
- High
- Moderate
- Low
- Very low

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