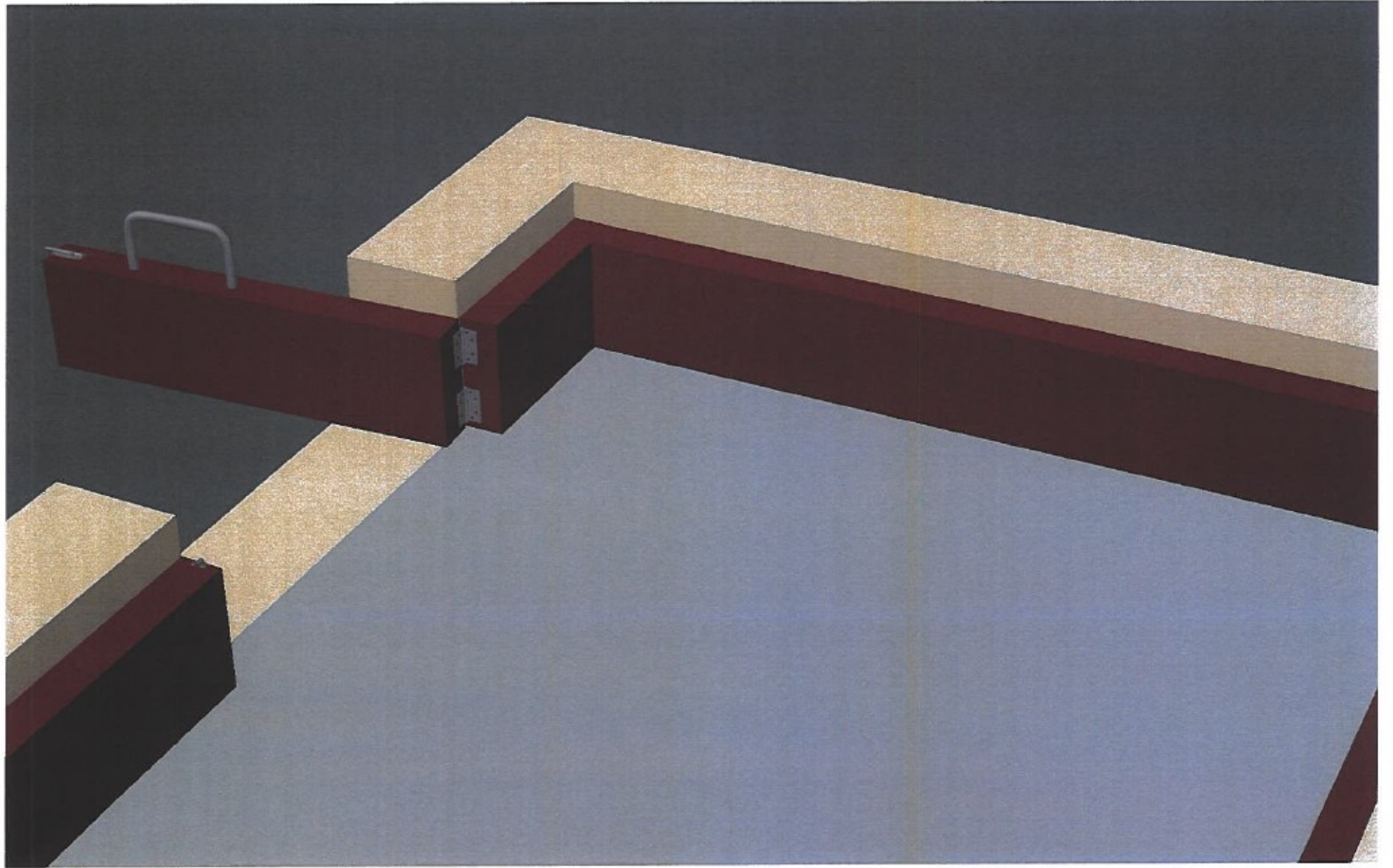






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## High-Quality Parks Are in Excellent Physical Condition

### KEY QUESTIONS

- Is the park well maintained?
  - Are park amenities in good condition?
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The condition of parks—including how they are maintained day-to-day and the state of the equipment and infrastructure they contain—is a fundamental building block of park quality. Playgrounds, trails, sports courts, pools, natural areas, and other types of spaces that are well cared for are welcoming, promote feelings of safety, encourage community stewardship, and boost civic trust.<sup>8</sup>

Maintenance has long been a key priority for parks and recreation departments, and some are testing new ways of tracking and evaluating it. Ongoing maintenance assessments allow agencies to shift dollars, personnel, and schedules to ensure equitable and consistent levels of upkeep across their systems. For many

departments, these evaluations are underscoring the critical difference between equally distributing maintenance resources and achieving an equitable level of maintenance across sites.

Quality is also determined by the structural condition of park infrastructure requiring capital investment. With constrained park budgets, the renovation and replacement of these assets is often put off. However, park professionals understand the detrimental impact broken swings, missing benches, and cracked pavement have on park users' experience, so many are systematically assessing the condition of the amenities in their parks and applying that information to prioritize improvements.

# Is the Park Well Maintained?

To assess maintenance levels, parks and recreation departments are developing maintenance standards and evaluating how the upkeep of their parks measures up. These standards typically focus on the aspects of maintenance that most affect user experience—including the cleanliness of restrooms and other facilities, trash, landscaping, signage, paving, and graffiti—and define the frequencies of tasks or the outcomes of those tasks.

Measuring the frequency of care makes it easy to determine whether standards are being met. The **Lewisville, Texas**, Parks and Recreation Department classifies parks from AA to D and assigns each category specific frequencies for various maintenance tasks.