**Name**: Living Within a Half-Mile of a Park

**Short Description**: The percent of the population that lives within a half-mile of a park.

**Data Source**:

* Name: National Environmental Public Health (EPH) Tracking Network Query Tool
* Link to Source: https://ephtracking.cdc.gov/DataExplorer/

**Year(s):** 2015

**Source Geographic Level**: Census Tract

**Stratification**: Not applicable to parks.

**Selection Rationale:** This measure helps capture the effects of access to parks as spaces to engage with nature, as well as recreation and physical activity, on mental wellness.

**Strengths and Limitations**:

* **Strengths**:
  + *[Importance]* Because proximity to a park is associated with better mental health1, this measure can contribute to identifying geographic areas where parks may contribute to mental wellness. The percent of the population living within a half-mile of a park was selected due to the mental health benefits associated with living near a park and access to recreational/natural areas.[[1]](#footnote-2),[[2]](#footnote-3) In a study of proximity to urban parks, better mental health was found to be significantly related to living within short walking distance (400m) of a park, and the mental health scores of those living further than this distance incrementally diminished; however, better mental health scores were still found for those within 800m (approximately ½ mile) of a park.[[3]](#footnote-4)
  + *[Relevance and Usability]* This measure is easy to understand and provides information on access to parks related to mental wellness.
  + *[Scientific Soundness]* An independent quality assurance and quality control analysis was conducted and found less than a .0001% difference between a 5% random sample and the original, overall estimate of individuals living within a half-mile of a park, suggesting that this data is accurate and reliable.[[4]](#footnote-5)
* **Limitations**:
  + *[Equity]* Although proximity to parks and green spaces correlates with mental health, there are many factors that can impact and attenuate this relationship. Proximity to parks and green space alone is likely not enough to achieve better mental health because not all parks are of equal quality; levels of accessibility, aesthetics, activity opportunities, and social interactions of these parks should ideally be taken into consideration.[[5]](#footnote-6)
  + *[Feasibility]* The EPH Tracking Tool pulls park data from Navteq (2010)[[6]](#footnote-7), Esri StreetMap Premium HERE parks datasets (2015)[[7]](#footnote-8), and the U.S. Geological Survey Protected Areas Database (2015).[[8]](#footnote-9) While the data is currently publicly available, it is unknown if this data will continue to be updated in the coming years.
  + *[Scientific Soundness]* This dataset represents a wide spectrum of infrastructure that encourages physical activity, but it is not possible to determine the completeness of data coverage.[[9]](#footnote-10)

**Default Weight**:4.3% (*see Weighting Documentation for details on how default weights were assigned*)

**Calculation**:

1. Balseviciene, B., Sinkariova, L., Grazuleviciene, R., Andrusaityte, S., Uzdanaviciute, I., Dedele, A., & Nieuwenhuijsen, M. J. (2014). Impact of residential greenness on preschool children's emotional and behavioral problems. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 11(7), 6757–6770. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph110706757> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Mitchell, R. J., Richardson, E. A., Shortt, N. K., & Pearce, J. R. (2015). Neighborhood Environments and Socioeconomic Inequalities in Mental Well-Being. *American journal of preventive medicine*, 49(1), 80–84. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2015.01.017> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Sturm, R., & Cohen, D. (2014). Proximity to urban parks and mental health. *The journal of mental health policy and economics*, 17(1), 19–24. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Healthy Community Design Initiative and Geospatial Research Analysis and Services Program. National percentage of population that resides within half a mile of a park. Accessed From: <https://ephtracking.cdc.gov/DataExplorer>. Accessed on 06/11/2021 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Carter, M., Horwitz, P. Beyond Proximity: The Importance of Green Space Useability to Self-Reported Health. *EcoHealth* 11, 322–332 (2014). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10393-014-0952-9> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Available at: <https://www.here.com/navteq> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Available at: <https://www.esri.com/en-us/arcgis/products/arcgis-streetmap-premium/overview?rsource=%2Fdata%2Fstreetmap> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Available at: <https://www.usgs.gov/core-science-systems/science-analytics-and-synthesis/gap/science/protected-areas> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Healthy Community Design Initiative and Geospatial Research Analysis and Services Program. National percentage of population that resides within half a mile of a park. Accessed From: <https://ephtracking.cdc.gov/DataExplorer>. Accessed on 06/11/2021 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)