

# 2014 ANNUAL URBAN FOREST REPORT

JULY 1, 2013-JUNE 30, 2014



The **Urban Forestry Council** advises city departments, including the Board of Supervisors and the mayor. Its tasks are to develop a comprehensive urban forest plan; educate the public; develop tree-care standards; identify funding needs, staffing needs, and opportunities for urban forest programs; secure adequate resources for urban forest programs; facilitate coordination of tree-management responsibilities among agencies; and report on the state of the urban forest

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Urban Forestry Council members from left to right:

Andrew Sullivan, Landscape Architect

Carla Short, Urban Forester, San Francisco Department of Public Works – VICE CHAIR

Dan Flanagan, Executive Director of Friends of the Urban Forest – CHAIR

Dan Kida, Sr. Program Manager, Vegetation Management Quality Control, PG&E

John Leffingwell, Consulting Arborist, HortScience

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Please note: While this report seeks to be as comprehensive as possible, it is based on data provided by responding agencies and does not include complete information on all urban forestry work performed within the San Francisco.

## **Overview of San Francisco's Urban Forest, FY 2013-2014**

SF Environment staff surveyed 20 city departments, public agencies, and non-government organizations that oversee or manage a portion of the urban forest in San Francisco. Organizations were asked to provide information on forestry budget and staffing, maintenance activities, accomplishments, and concerns in fiscal year 2013-2014. Of the 20 organizations surveyed, 16 provided full or partial responses.

This data is tracked to:

- Better understand the resources used to maintain the urban forest across the city.
- Track the priorities, needs, and concerns of city departments and local nonprofits, and monitor how they change over time.
- Better understand threats to the future well-being of our urban forest.
- Find ways to increase the contributions that trees provide to our community.

In fiscal year 2013-2013, reporting organizations **planted 3,126 trees** and **removed 3,003 trees**. The 15 responding organizations with forestry management programs provided care, such as pruning, inspection, and watering to **16,273 trees**.

This fiscal year, several forestry programs saw an increase in funding and/or staffing levels. Of the 13 organizations that responded to last year's report and this year's report, there was a **27.8% increase in forestry staff**. San Francisco agencies reported approximately **129 full-time staff** equivalent (FTE) positions that dedicated a portion of their time to urban forest program. Of these staff positions, approximately **98.5 FTEs are dedicated to planting and maintaining trees**.

**As in all previous Annual Urban Forest Reports, departments and agencies identified funding and staffing constraints as their greatest limitations.** Forest managers reported **concern for tree health**, citing **extreme drought stress, aging tree populations, and pests/diseases** that are affecting several species, including myoporium (thrips), Monterey Pines (pine pitch canker), palm trees (fusarium), and pear trees (fireblight). Several responding organizations reported declining health in redwood trees and stands due to drought stressing and unidentified disease issues. Out of the fifteen responding forest managers, ten identified significant concerns with pests and diseases. While this is consistent with previous years, this year many tree managers reported tree removal for hazard mitigation of diseased trees this year.



Among the 13 organizations that provided data for both last year’s report and this year’s report, 12 have active tree management programs: California Department of Transportation, San Francisco Department of Public Health General Hospital campus, the Department of Public Works, Friends of the Urban Forest, Pacific Gas & Electric, The San Francisco Port Authority, the Presidio Trust, The Recreation and Park Department, the San Francisco International Airport, San Francisco Unified School District, The Treasure Island Development Authority, and the University of California San Francisco campus.

2012-2013	Trees within these programs			2013-2014	Trees within these programs		
	Planted	Cared for	Removed		Planted	Cared for	Removed
<b>Total</b>	<b>3901</b>	<b>13716</b>	<b>1429</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>3066</b>	<b>15486</b>	<b>2971</b>

From last fiscal year to this fiscal year, reported **tree planting decreased by 21.4%**, **while tree removal continues the trend from last year of increasing by a significant margin**. This year, among the organizations that responded both last year and this year, **tree removal increased by 107%**. Part, but not all, of this increase can be explained by reported data from DPW; in previous years, DPW provided information only on tree work in-house. This year, DPW also provided information on permits that they issued to adjacent private property owners. DPW’s actual in-house tree removals reduced from 139 trees removed last year to 130 trees removed this year. Similarly, General Hospital, the PORT, PG&E, RPD, SFO, SFUSD, and the Presidio Trust all removed fewer trees this year than last year. Caltrans, TIDA, and UCSF increased tree removals.

**Of significant importance, the Urban Forest Plan, Phase 1: Street Trees was completed in May 2014. The Urban Forestry Council supports the Urban Forest Plan and urges the Board of Supervisors and the Planning Commission to adopt and implement the Plan, prioritize stable funding for urban forestry programs, and prioritize completion of the next two phases of the Urban Forest Plan.**

## **List of Participating Organizations**

The following organizations and city departments responded to the survey:

- California Department of Transportation, District 4 (CalTrans)
- City College of San Francisco (CCSF)
- Department of Public Health, General Hospital (DPH-GH)
- Department of Public Works (DPW)
- Friends of the Urban Forest (FUF)
- Municipal Transit Authority (MTA)
- Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E)
- Port of San Francisco (PORT)
- Presidio Trust (Trust)
- Recreation and Park Department (RPD)
- San Francisco International Airport (SFO)
- San Francisco Planning Department
- San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD)
- San Francisco State University (SFSU)
- Treasure Island Development Authority (TIDA)
- University of California, San Francisco (UCSF)

The following organizations and departments did not respond to the survey request:

- Department of Public Health, Laguna Honda Hospital (DPH-LH)
- Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Fort Mason (GGNRA)
- Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure (OCII) (Successor Agency to the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency)
- Public Utilities Commission (PUC)

## **Major opportunities and challenges reported by participating organizations**

Management of San Francisco's urban forest is divided among many stakeholders who provide direct care to trees within land under their jurisdiction, as well as nonprofit organizations who engage with agency partners to support forestry activities on city-owned land.

The **California Department of Transportation, District 4** (CalTrans) manages the care and oversight of trees and green spaces on state rights-of-way in the Bay Area and works with the Adopt-A-Highway division to allow neighborhood groups access to land for community gardening. This year, Caltrans increased spraying and mulch application to reduce weeds and mitigate fire danger, with a high priority on managing drought issues. Watering was targeted and minimize. Caltrans worked with the City on a planting at McKinley Square where approximately 20-30 diseased pine trees were removed.

**City College of San Francisco** removed several Monterey Pine trees from the Phelan Ave campus this year. As in previous years, they remain concern with the low of tree canopy cover and low prioritization of urban forestry programs across the city. CCSF staff note a need for improved tree management policy and adoption of a citywide forestry management plan to address these issues.

The **San Francisco Department of Public Health** (SFDPH) has multiple facilities with on-site trees, though the General Hospital facility was the only site to respond to this year's survey. This year, adjacent street tree care was relinquished to the Hospital from DPW, who provided complete pruning care, as well as developing a comprehensive tree care for the future. The Hospital hired a Certified Arborist to fill their 2nd full-time gardening staff position. Hospital gardening staff is concerned with the health of several pine trees that are in decline due to bark beetle infestation, which will all need to be removed, several eucalyptus that are in declining health, severe drought stress affecting approximately 100 redwood trees, and ongoing construction which is causing continuing losses of mature trees on their campus. They additionally note a need to improve forestry management policies to better manage these concerns, especially in drought conditions.

The **Department of Public Works** (DPW) provides oversight and care to trees within the City's public rights-of way, including planting and maintaining street trees, issuing street tree planting and removal permits to residents, and providing emergency street tree response. DPW has continued to transfer the maintenance responsibility of formerly DPW maintained trees to adjacent property owners, and remains concerned about public response to the tree maintenance transfer, lack of funding, and long term financing for tree care. Their Urban Forestry inspection staff has improved efficiency through use of electronic tablets in the field for the last year. The tablets contain DPW's full tree database, allowing them to access open service requests and permits. Additionally, when evaluating trees and a site, they can take photos and associate them with the specific trees in their tree database, write comments and generate letters to property owners – all while being on location. DPW is excited about the

Urban Forest Plan that was finalized and published this year with the help of the Planning Department, Friends of the Urban Forest, and the Urban Forestry Council, among others.

**Friends of the Urban Forest (FUF)** helps individuals and neighborhood groups plant and care for street trees and sidewalk gardens in San Francisco. FUF has further refined their community-based Sidewalk Landscaping Program to maximize concrete removal in and around existing trees improving the longevity of street trees. This program provided important environmental benefits, including groundwater recharge. They have made improvements to their tree care program, including better GIS Mapping that aided in increased staff efficiency. Additionally, FUF has incorporated tree care volunteer programming with tree planting events, to improve 'tree care awareness' to new tree stewards. FUF's key focus in the coming months will be to draw attention to problems with the way the City maintains street trees, with an end goal of proposing a solution based on the recently published Urban Forest Master Plan, Phase 1: Street Trees.

The **Municipal Transportation Authority (MTA)** has hired additional employees to improve the management of their landscaped areas, though note a continuing concern with staffing levels.

**Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E)** works with property owners to resolve conflicts between trees and power lines. As in past reports, they identified concerns with public safety and service reliability due to conflicts between power lines and trees, especially palm trees, which, due to their structure and growth habit, cannot be effectively pruned away from power lines. PG&E is additionally concerned with safely pruning trees near cars that are parked alongside the curb.

**SF Planning Department (Planning)** plays a supportive role for urban forest managers in San Francisco, providing technical and financial assistance. The Planning Department recently completed an Urban Wood Re-Use Study in collaboration with Presidio Graduate School. The financing study they helped finance with RPD last fiscal year resulted in a \$1M infusion of funds to contract tree work in city parks. In collaboration with DPW, FUF, and the UFC, Planning completed the Urban Forest Plan (Phase 1: Street Trees) in May 2014. As in previous years, Planning remains concerned with secure, ongoing maintenance funding for street trees and parks trees. Planning will be focused on gaining endorsement/adoption of the Urban Forest Plan by Planning Commission & Board of Supervisors and Completion of Citywide Street Tree Census in the upcoming fiscal year.

The **Port of San Francisco (PORT)** manages the care of trees along the San Francisco Bay waterfront. The Port continues to be highly concerned with escalating loss of palm trees, due to *Fusarium* wilt fungal infections. This year, the PORT successfully created new annual capital project funding for the replacement of the dead palm trees on the Embarcadero. They have secured \$135K for fiscal year 2014-2015 and \$175K for fiscal year 2015-2016. The Port is working closely with the Department of Public Works in determining tree health and care along with the planning of tree replacement.



The **Presidio Trust** (Trust) oversees approximately 70K trees in the Presidio of San Francisco, 1,491 acre National Historic Landmark located within GGNRA lands. The Trust actively manages more than 10K trees. The Trust has been engaged in ambitious reforestation work based on their Vegetation Management Plan, which was adopted in 2011. Their greatest concern is the age and vitality of the Presidio's Historic Forest. The Trust reports that natural regeneration in the Presidio's forested areas has been limited and without intervention the aging forest will decline, noting specific concerns with declining coniferous tree health.

The **Recreation and Parks Department** (RPD) FY14-15 budget included \$605,443 in additional resources to fund 5 new positions: four 3434 Arborist Technicians and one 3426 Urban Forester. Additionally, RPD received one-time funding of \$1M to fund contract tree work per the recommendation of the Financing the Urban Forest – Park Trees Report that was published in February 2014. Though these are significant successes, funding and staffing levels are still inadequate to properly manage trees within their jurisdiction and RPD continues to be concerned with the safety of an over-aged park tree canopy.

The **San Francisco International Airport** (SFO) manages natural areas, trees, and landscaped areas surrounding the San Francisco Airport. SFO is focused on improving pollution and pest management within difficult environmental conditions. They are very concerned with the drought and have been closely monitoring on-site water use. As landscape trees grow in areas adjacent to roadways and signage, SFO focuses on ensuring visibility and safety of these vital structures while improving the health of the trees and open space under their management. SFO has devoted an increased amount of resources into managing onsite Redwood trees with biochar soil injections and deep root fertilizing.

The **San Francisco Unified School District** (SFUSD) provides care and maintenance for approximately 3K trees on 430 acres of school district property. As in past years, SFUSD remains highly concerned with ongoing staffing and funding needs for forestry work, with a static budget that has increased nominally in years, despite increased tree maintenance requirements, indentifying concerns with maintaining large tress on their school campuses.

**San Francisco State University** (SFSU) reports that they have increased tree planting on the campus, planting 45 trees this fiscal year. They are concerned with the poor health of redwood trees on campus, that they do not believe is the result of drought stressing.

The **Treasure Island Development Authority's** (TIDA) oversees the care of all trees on Treasure Island. TIDA seeks to maintain the health of their existing trees and identify solutions to mitigate tree disease within their property. For fiscal year 2014-2015, TIDA has allocated approximately \$321K that will be work ordered to DPW to implement a Treasure Island Tree Maintenance Program, allowing TIDA to assess their trees Island wide, remove dead trees, and prune tree limbs to both mitigate hazards to facilities and overhead utility infrastructure as well as to further beautify the Island. They are concerned with maintaining tree health, including understanding the causes of tree disease and identifying solutions to mitigate potential property damage that could be caused by tree failure. TIDA planted 11 new lemon trees on the island what are part of the Just One Tree Program. Whenever possible, removed trees are mulched or

chipped and provided to Rubicon Landscaping and Treasure Island Job Corps Urban Farm for re-use of mulch/chips.

The **University of California, San Francisco** (UCSF) owns a largely undeveloped 61-acre area just south of the Parnassus Heights campus called the Mount Sutro Open Space Reserve. UCSF is committed to maintaining the Reserve as a safe and accessible resource that San Francisco residents and visitors can enjoy. UCSF has ongoing concerns with an ageing urban forest on Parnassus campus, extreme drought stress, disease and pests, mitigating fire hazards, community engagement and funding constraints. UCSF reports that they began implementing urgent fire safety measures in August/September 2013.

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**Responses from the 2013 Annual Urban Forest Report Survey**

**Table 1: Respondents were asked about staffing and budget**

Department	Urban forest-related staff positions	# Staff (or FTE equiv) performing only forestry work	Total department budget	Urban forestry related budget	Est. % of UF budget spent on tree planting, care, and removal	
					Amount	%
Cal Trans	4	2.5	5,000,000*			20%*
CCSF	2	0	900,000,000	10,000	10,000	100%
DPH-GH	2.5	0	1,000,000	100,000	45,000	45%
DPW	47	36	159,380,342	9,461,173	4,825,198	51%
FUF	13	6	1,813,794	1,290,045	1,290,045	100%
MTA	3	0.02		200,000	20,000	10%
PG&E	1	5				
Planning	0.4			225,000		
PORT	2	0	93,820,867	144,347	40,000	28%
Trust	10	9		1,187,007	1,187,007	100%
RPD	33	33	163,240,000	4,573,000	914,600	20%
SFO	2	0		125,000	25,000	20%
SFUSD	0	0	1,000,682	60,000	60,000	100%
SFSU	2	2	900,000			
TIDA	2	0	16,325,800	1,059,490	317,847	30%
UCSF	5	5	8,000,000	150,000	150,000	100%
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>128.9 FTE</b>	<b>98.52 FTE</b>	<b>\$1,334,155,685</b>	<b>\$17,525,572</b>	<b>\$8,884,697</b>	<b>—</b>

\*Figure is for all of the CalTrans District 4, Southwest Region, including San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara counties.

**Table 2: Respondents were asked about work plans**

Dept.	How many trees within the department's purview were:			Work the department performed for others:	Work other departments performed for the departments or org:
	Planted	Cared for	Removed		
<b>Caltrans</b>	153	75	35		
<b>CCSF</b>	4	500	15		Davey Tree removed 12 trees; Chris Campbell removed 3 trees
<b>DPH-GH</b>	6	75	8		DPW cared for 30 trees and removed 4; Daveys tree service removed 2 trees
<b>DPW</b>	1869*	2,337	1124**	DPW performed a lot of work for other departments, See "DPW FOR OTHER ORGS" tab.	FUF planted 1029 trees
<b>FUF</b>	1077	3,000	0	SF DOE (Not in the Public ROW) - planted and cared for 48 trees; the other 1029 trees planted on DPW jurisdiction	
<b>MTA</b>	11	37	2		DPW removed 2 trees
<b>PG&amp;E</b>		2,000	136		Utility Tree Service provided care for 2K trees and removed 136 trees; WECl prescribed tree work
<b>PORT</b>	50	200	6		DPW planted 2 trees, cared for 175 trees, and removed 2 trees.

<b>Presidio</b>	300	4,500	182	"N/A"	
<b>RPD</b>	573	154	178	None	SFRPD Capital Division planted 302, cared for 20, removed 26 for hazard abatement
<b>SFO</b>	50	500	10	Cal trans as noted	
<b>SFUSD</b>	10	1650	10	"N/A"	Peninsula Tree Care cared for 25 trees and removed 10; FUF planted 30 trees.
<b>SFSU</b>	45	250	15		
<b>TIDA</b>	11	600	24		DPW cared for ~200 trees and removed 24; Rubicon Landscaping cared for ~400 trees; Just One Tree Planted 11 trees.
<b>UCSF</b>	44	395	1258		Multiple. See tab 3 "USCF contractors)
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>3126</b>	<b>16273</b>	<b>3003</b>	<b>Three (3) orgs performed work for a total of 11 other orgs.</b>	<b>Ten (10) orgs hired or otherwise engaged nineteen (19) orgs who performed work for them.</b>

\*Of the 1869 planted trees reported by DPW: 981 were planted by DPW staff, 251 were permits issued to private property owners to plant new trees, and 637 were permits were issued to plant replacement trees.

\*\* Of the 1124 tree removals reported by DPW: 130 were removed by DPW staff, 637 were permits issued to remove trees that were replanted, and 331 were permits issued to removal trees that were not replanted. An additional 26 trees were known illegal tree removals; DPW reports that there were likely additional illegal tree removals.

**Table 3: Respondents were asked about species selection**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Most commonly planted species</b>	<b>Struggling species</b>	<b>Experimental species</b>
<b>Cal Trans</b>	Elms, Pines and Redwoods	Eucalyptus and palms	No
<b>CCSF</b>	Cypress 2 Metrocidros 2 Jacaranda Trees street tree replacement only.	"all"	No-no budget
<b>DPH-GH</b>	3 apple trees, 1 plum, 1 birch	Struggling: Pines, Plane, Palms Plant no more: Purple leaf plum, palms, Maytens, Brugmansia	Planted fruit trees and Agonis flexuosa 'Jervis Bay After Dark.' Will plant Calocedrus decurrens
<b>DPW</b>	Lophostemon confertus, Tristania laurina, Pittosporum undulatum	Myoporum laetum, continuing to be severely impacted by thrips, but we haven't planted this species in a long time. Pyrus calleryana – continues to be impacted by fireblight, although 'New Bradford' is supposed to be more resistant.	Ceiba speciosa were planted in the Cesar Chavez St. median as part of the Streetscape improvements. Not appropriate for placement in the sidewalk, but the median may provide enough room for the root system.
<b>FUF</b>	Arbutus 'Marina', Tristania laurina, Magnolia g. 'Little Gem', Olea e. 'Majestic Beauty' (fruitless var.), Tristania l. 'Elegant', Lagunaria pattersonii, Ginkgo b. 'Autumn Gold'	Myoporum (Obviously), Pyrus k. and Pyrus c. we have reduced greatly due to disease. Prunus c. 'KV', Acer buergeranum, Jacaranda, Ceanothus 'Ray Hartman' (in sidewalks) and Magnolia doltsopa.	Zelcova a., Eriobotrya d., Pistacia c., Agonis f., Lagunaria p.,
<b>MTA</b>	Podocarpus, liquidambar, Dodonea	no	no



<b>PG&amp;E</b>	No answer provided	No answer provided	No answer provided
<b>Planning</b>	Olive, Olea europaea Catalina Iron wood, Lyonothamnus floribundusand Monterey Cypress, Cupressus macrocarpa	Phoenix canariensis, canary island date palm due to Fusarium wilt. Myoporium laetum, the lollipop tree due to thrip infection.	Canary Island Pine Catalina Ironwood Olive
<b>PORT</b>	Monterey cypress, Shore pine, Bishop pine	Lophostemon confertus	Maritime pine, Sargent's cypress, MacNab's cypress
<b>Trust</b>	Monterey Cypress, Live Oak, and Coast Redwood	Monterey Pine (Pine Pitch Canker) Myoporium (Myoporium Thrip)	Canker-inoculated/resistant Monterey Pine
<b>RPD</b>	Quercus agrifolia, Platanus racemosa, prunus ilicifolia Lyonii (catalina cherry )	No answer provided	We planted some Wollemi pines
<b>SFO</b>	Arbutus Marina Olea europaea	Myoporium, Ficus, Pine, or any large tree due to maintenance problems.	no
<b>SFUSD</b>	Cupressus marrocarpa Magnolia stellate Arbutus x 'Marina"	No	Castanea sativa 'Walker Loves"
<b>SFSU</b>	Lemon tree	We likely would not re-plant eucalyptus based on past experience.	Lemon trees were planted on- Island as part of the Just One Tree program. It will be interesting to see their development in the on-Island climate.
<b>TIDA</b>	Redwood, buckeye, elderberry	Metrosideros	"To be determined"
<b>UCSF</b>	Elms, Pines and Redwoods	Eucalyptus and palms	No

<b>RESULTS</b>	<b>Most commonly planted trees:</b> <b>Mont Cypress (5);</b> <b>strawberry tree (3);</b> <b>Olives (3);</b> <b>Redwoods (3);</b> <b>Tristainia laurina (3);</b> <b>Fruit trees (3)</b>	<b>Mostly commonly cited struggling trees:</b> <b>Myoporyum (5);</b> <b>Palms (4);</b> <b>Pears (3);</b> <b>Pines (3);</b> <b>Purpleleaf plum (2);</b> <b>Eucs (2)</b>	<b>Most commonly cited experimental trees:</b>  <b>Pines (5);</b> <b>Agonis flexuosa (2);</b> <b>Fruit trees (2)</b>
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Table 4: Respondents were asked to rate commonly cited urban forest-related concerns on a 1-5 scale, with 1 being “not significant” and 5 being “extremely significant”

Department	Inability to provide adequate care to established trees	Loss of significant numbers of trees due to age and/or disease	Inability to provide adequate care to newly planted trees	Inefficiencies in the way forestry programs operate on a city-wide basis	Loss of significant numbers of trees due to vandalism, illegal pruning, and/or illegal removal	Loss of significant numbers of trees due to development
Caltrans	3	4	5	3	3	2
CCSF	5	5	5	4	5	5
DPH-GH	5	5	1	4	2	5
DPW	5	3	4	3	4	5
FUF	5	5	3	3	5	3
MTA	3	1	2	3	1	1
PORT	4	3	4	3	1	1
Presidio	3	5	3	1	1	1
RPD	5	4	2	3	4	2
SFO	2	1	2	No answer	1	1
SFUSD	5	1	5	4	1	1
SFSU	2	1	1	1	1	1
TIDA	3	5	1	1	1	1
UCSF	2	5	2	3	3	2
<b>TOTAL:</b>	52	48	40	36	33	31
<b>AVERAGED</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>2</b>

<b>TOTAL</b>						
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Table 5: Respondents were asked commonly cited limitations that affect their forestry programming on a 1-5 scale, with 1 being “not significant” and 5 being “extremely significant”

Department	Staffing constraints	Funding constraints	Prioritization of urban forestry programs within your agency/the city at large	Lack of coordinated efforts to protect and manage the overall urban forest	Lack of management plan	Lack of tree inventory
Caltrans	5	5	4	2	1	1
CCSF	5	5	5	5	5	5
DPH-GH	5	4	4	3	2	2
DPW	5	5	5	4	3	4
FUF	1	5	1	5	5	5
MTA	5	2	3	3	1	1
PORT	3	2	4	4	3	1
Presidio	4	3	3	3	1	1
RPD	5	5	3	3	2	3
SFO	3	2	2	2	2	1
SFUSD	5	5	4	4	4	2
SFSU	1	1	3	1	1	1
TIDA	1	3	2	1	1	3
UCSF	5	4	2	4	2	2
<b>TOTAL:</b>	53	51	45	44	33	32
<b>AVERAGED</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>2.1</b>

TOTAL						
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