



Highlights

Why OCA Did This Study

In accordance with the City Auditor's FY 2019 Work Plan, we conducted a performance audit of the City's Administration of Joint Use Agreement. Our audit objective was to assess the effectiveness of the program regarding the internal controls, compliance with laws and contracts, and conformance with best practices.

What OCA Recommends

OCA made [four recommendations](#) to improve the program, all of which management agreed to implement. We recommend the following:

- Parks and Recreation Department revise the MOU to reflect the vision and shared goals of the City and District. Parks and Recreation should work with the City Attorney's Office to determine an acceptable solution for any potential maintenance amounts that may be the District's responsibility per the existing MOU requirements.
- Parks and Recreation Department implement a tracking system for the Joint Use agreements for each site.
- Parks and Recreation Department develop policies and procedures with a process narrative describing relevant City department's responsibilities for inputs in the tracking system.
- Parks and Recreation Department, Planning Department, and City Attorney's Office develop a proposal for City Council to consider revisions to Council Policy 700-35.

For more information, contact the Office of the City Auditor at (619) 533-3165 or cityauditor@sandiego.gov.

Performance Audit of the City's Administration of Joint Use Agreements with San Diego Unified School District

The Administration of Joint Use Agreements Can be Improved through Alignment of Policy to Practice and Implementing Internal Controls

What OCA Found

Joint Use Agreements (JUAs) are a great way to open more accessible park space to the public. To that end, the City of San Diego (City) has entered into more than 85 agreements with the San Diego Unified School District (District) to access over 300 acres of playgrounds and fields on District property during off-school hours. The City and District are continuing these agreements through the "Play All Day" parks program initiative put forth to break ground on over 45 new joint-use park sites in the next 5-10 years. As stated in the program literature, joint-use partnerships with schools fill an essential gap in addressing the City's need for more park land and additional recreational opportunities in our communities.

Finding 1: The City Does Not Track Key Financial Terms Related to Joint Use Sites

The City and the District have each made significant financial contributions for the joint use park program with a current estimated valuation of \$275 million for land, development and maintenance as of FY 2018. However, the City has not followed the financial terms of the joint use program as required by the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and the JUAs. These financial terms require updating land, development, and maintenance costs as appraisals are done and park development is completed and adjusting maintenance costs for increases. Under the current MOU and JUAs, the District is potentially responsible for some prior maintenance costs. Meanwhile, City officials continue to present JUAs to the City Council with the pledge that the contracts are in compliance with the MOU, despite the City management's and the District's decision not to follow the MOU and JUA required financial calculations.



Finding 2: The City Council Policy Guiding the Development of School Sites for Park Purposes No Longer Reflects Program Administration

The City Council approved Council Policy 700-35 in 1981 to provide guidance on the selection, funding, and construction of joint use sites between the City and District. According to Parks and Recreation Department management, the Council Policy reflected the economic status of the City and the District at that time. However, significant changes to the administration of the joint use program have occurred in the 38 years since the City Council Policy was last updated. Specifically, as described in Finding 1, the City and District entered into an MOU in 2002, which included the Joint Use Agreements, and also included a complex financial contribution methodology. This was a material shift away from the lease agreements discussed in Council Policy 700-35.