
CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
OFFICE OF THE CITY AUDITOR



Audit of Parks & Recreation Department
Playgrounds and Exercise Equipment Maintenance
(Corrected)

Project No. AU18-014

September 25, 2018

Kevin W. Barthold, CPA, CIA, CISA
City Auditor

Executive Summary

As part of our annual Audit Plan approved by City Council, we conducted an audit of the Parks & Recreation (Parks) Department, specifically playgrounds & exercise equipment maintenance. The audit objectives, conclusions, and recommendations follow:

Determine if park playgrounds and exercise equipment are regularly inspected and maintained.

Park playgrounds and exercise equipment are regularly inspected and maintained. Parks performs annual playground safety inspections to ensure all components are compliant with playground inspection standards. In addition, Parks performs monthly inspections of playgrounds and exercise equipment to ensure functionality and identify maintenance needs.

However, we identified areas in need of improvement. Maintenance needs identified during inspections were not completed timely. In addition, support documentation for inspections lacked essential information for the thoroughness of each review. Finally, we identified 5 installations of exercise equipment that were unaccounted for and subject to inspection.

We recommend the Director of Parks & Recreation:

- Revise the current maintenance process and develop appropriate service level agreements (SLA)¹ to reflect the various maintenance needs. In addition, develop monitoring controls to ensure identified maintenance needs are completed timely. Finally, revise current inspection forms to ensure all essential inspection information is documented.
- In collaboration with City departments, develop a formalized process to identify equipment subject to inspection. In addition, develop monitoring controls and revise current inspection forms to ensure exercise equipment is inspected and essential information is documented.

Parks & Recreation Management agreed with the audit findings and has developed positive action plans to address them. Management's verbatim response is in Appendix B on page 6.

¹ Service level agreements specify respective department deliverables such as the agreed upon number of days or hours it should take to complete each service request.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	i
Background.....	1
Audit Scope and Methodology	2
Audit Results and Recommendations	3
A. Inspection Process	3
B. Exercise Equipment.....	3
Appendix A – Staff Acknowledgement	5
Appendix B – Management Response.....	6

Background

The Parks and Recreation (Parks) Department operates the City's recreational and cultural programs and maintains more than 240 City-owned parks consisting of 208 playgrounds and 52 exercise equipment stations. The mission of Parks is to provide exceptional parks, facilities, programs and services to improve the quality of life.

To help accomplish its mission, Parks performs two types of inspections to address maintenance needs and ensure the overall safety of playgrounds:

- *Low Frequency Inspections* are conducted once annually by a Certified Playground Safety Inspector. These are performed in accordance with applicable playground standards. Low frequency inspections provide an in-depth look at every playground component.
- *High Frequency Inspections* are conducted by trained Parks Department Staff on a monthly basis or as approved by the Parks Director. These inspections serve as an added measure to ensure playground and exercise equipment functionality through a visual inspection of the play or natural environment.

The Park Operations team performs maintenance on playground and exercise equipment through work order requests, which are initiated by calls from citizens or parks staff with knowledge of needed playground maintenance. Once work order requests have been identified, they are linked to established SLA and must be completed within required timelines.

Audit Scope and Methodology

The audit scope consisted of playground and exercise equipment inspections from fiscal year 2017 and subsequent maintenance work orders from fiscal year 2017 through 2018.

We interviewed Parks staff and performed walk-throughs to gain an understanding of playground and exercise equipment inspection process and related maintenance. We reviewed federal playground safety guidelines to gain an understanding of inspection requirements. We reviewed their warranty utilization process for reasonableness and to confirm applicable warranties were utilized in the acquiring of qualified parts.

We reviewed 35 low frequency inspections to verify compliance with inspection standards, completeness, and supervisory review. In addition, we also verified inspections were performed by a certified playground safety inspector.

We reviewed 35 high frequency playground inspections and 25 inspections of exercise equipment from fiscal year 2017 for appropriate documentation, completeness, and supervisory review. We also reviewed subsequent work orders to confirm they were completed timely and in accordance with established SLA.

We reviewed closed capital projects and Parks & Recreation master listing to verify all playgrounds and exercise equipment located at City facilities were accounted for and subject to inspection.

We relied on computer-processed data in SAP to validate the work order creation and completion time. Our reliance was based on performing direct tests on the data rather than evaluating the system's general and application controls. Our direct testing included tracing work orders and verifying their creation and completion dates. We do not believe that the absence of testing general and application controls had an effect on the results of our audit.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Audit Results and Recommendations

A. Inspection Process

The Parks & Recreation (Parks) department performed required inspections in fiscal year 2017 to ensure compliance with inspection standards. Also, inspections were performed by a certified playground safety inspector. In addition, all playgrounds identified by Parks are reviewed on a periodic rotation for routine maintenance. However, maintenance needs identified during inspections were not repaired timely. In addition, current inspection forms utilized lacked essential information to ensure all components were inspected in accordance to playground inspection standards.

Park's process for the timely repair of identified maintenance needs improvement. We reviewed 95 inspections and determined that identified maintenance needs took on average 58 working days to complete. According to Park's Playground Inspection Guidelines, internal maintenance requests have a 7 day average SLA. However, current SLAs do not consider the time required to repair various categories of maintenance needs.

In addition, documentation of inspections did not include sufficient information to ensure all components were thoroughly reviewed. According to the Handbook for Public Playground Safety, all records should be maintained to document that requirements within the specification standards have been met. Insufficient support documentation may lead to increased liability to the City and undermine the integrity of the inspection process.

Recommendation

The Parks and Recreation Director revise the current maintenance process and develop appropriate SLAs to reflect the various maintenance needs. In addition, develop monitoring controls to ensure identified maintenance needs are completed timely. Finally, revise current inspection forms to ensure all essential inspection information is documented.

B. Exercise Equipment

We identified 5 facilities with exercise equipment that were not included for inspections. Specifically, 3 were located within parkland and 2 were located at libraries. Three facilities had not received an inspection and we could not determine if 2 facilities were inspected due to insufficient inspection documentation. Although facilities were not all located within parkland, the process to identify new equipment that is subject to inspection is ineffective.

Recommendation

The Parks & Recreation Director, in collaboration with City departments, develop a formalized process to identify equipment subject to inspection. In addition, develop monitoring controls and revise current inspection forms to ensure exercise equipment is inspected and essential information is documented.

Appendix A – Staff Acknowledgement

Buddy Vargas, CIA, CFE, Audit Manager
Lawrence Garza, CFE, Auditor in Charge
Abigail Medina, CPA, Auditor

Appendix B – Management Response



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

P.O. Box 839966
SAN ANTONIO TEXAS 78283-3966

June 21, 2018

Kevin W. Barthold, CPA, CIA, CISA
City Auditor
San Antonio, Texas

RE: Management's Corrective Action Plan for Audit of Parks & Recreation Department Playgrounds & Exercise Equipment

The Parks & Recreation Department has reviewed the audit report and has developed the Corrective Action Plans below corresponding to report recommendations.

Recommendation					
#	Description	Audit Report Page	Accept, Decline	Responsible Person's Name/Title	Completion Date
1	<p>Inspection Process</p> <p>The Parks and Recreation Director revise the current maintenance process and develop appropriate SLAs to reflect the various maintenance needs. In addition, develop monitoring controls to ensure identified maintenance needs are completed timely. Finally, revise current inspection forms to ensure all essential inspection information is documented.</p>	3	Accept	Victor Valdez, Parks and Recreation Manager	July 31, 2018

Audit of Parks & Recreation Department Playgrounds & Exercise Equipment

Recommendation					
#	Description	Audit Report Page	Accept, Decline	Responsible Person's Name/Title	Completion Date
	<p>Action plan: The audit recommendation to modify Service Level Agreement timelines reflects the need to establish a realistic average number of days to complete work orders to address maintenance needs in parks. While 44 of 95 inspections reviewed (46%) under audit review did not identify any maintenance issues or service requests, the balance did require some level of maintenance. As a result, 64 work orders across 95 inspections sites were generated taking an average of 58 working days to complete and which 69% did not impact usability of the park amenity. Completion of these work orders ranged from under 10 days (22%) to address items such as graffiti abatement, swing adjustments, and removal of ants & bees to over 100 days (19%) to address tree canopy issues, shade canopies under vendor warranty or that had to be special ordered, and general playground surface material or parts which also require ordering. At no time was the public at risk due to the time taken to complete the identified maintenance items. In these instances measures are taken to either remove individual broken components or parts that need to be replaced so that the overall playground unit is safe for use while the maintenance work is underway. In a case where that is not possible, the playground unit is taken off-line and secured so it cannot be used by the public.</p> <p>Playground inspection guidelines are in place which require inspections by a Certified Playground Safety Inspector; outline the frequency of inspections; identify documentation requirements utilizing inspection forms aligned with industry standards & manufacturer specifications; and include a randomly applied independent field verification review. The guidelines have been updated to reflect revisions to playground service request types in the CRM (Customer Relationship Management) and Work Order System and revised inspection forms.</p> <p>The Parks and Recreation Department, working with the 311 Customer Service Office, has requested to the Information Technology Services Department establishment of new additional playground service request types with appropriate SLA (Service Level Agreement) timeframes. Previously, only two playground service request types existed with a 1 day or 7 day SLA which did not realistically capture work that requires an extended period. Examples of this include warranty work such as frayed cables, discoloration of equipment and puckering of poured in place surfacing; or the ordering of replacement parts such as slides or a climbing apparatus which may require manufacturer fabrication and can take over four months to manufacture, receive and install. In these instances the individual component is removed so that the overall playground unit is safe for use while the replacement part request is processed. Identified maintenance needs will be recorded in the enterprise work order system upon completion of inspections so that service requests are appropriately initiated before work begins and are mapped to the correct service request type within the CRM and Work Order System.</p> <p>The playground inspection guidelines and forms have been updated so that all inspection information is captured and reported. The previous form reflected exception-based reporting that only documented non-compliance items. The revised form requires completion of all playground attributes that were found compliant and well as non-compliant during the inspection.</p>				

Audit of Parks & Recreation Department Playgrounds & Exercise Equipment

Recommendation					
#	Description	Audit Report Page	Accept, Decline	Responsible Person's Name/Title	Completion Date
2	<p>Exercise Equipment</p> <p>The Parks & Recreation Director, in collaboration with City departments, develop a formalized process to identify equipment subject to inspection. In addition, develop monitoring controls and revise current inspection forms to ensure exercise equipment is inspected and essential information is documented.</p>	3	Accept	Victor Valdez, Parks and Recreation Manager	July 31, 2018
<p>Action plan:</p> <p>The Parks and Recreation Department has begun the process of coordinating annually the development of a centralized inventory of all exercise equipment and playgrounds currently installed outdoors or planned for installation at all city facilities for the purpose of inspecting these amenities. Other City Departments that have indoor exercise equipment or playgrounds indoors such as the Human Services, Fire and Police will continue to manage their equipment including inspections and repair.</p> <p>The Playground Inspection Guidelines have been revised to include a process to annually request any change to inventory of playgrounds and exercise equipment across the City as part of the department's budget development process. This will ensure resources and performance measures reflect the inspections the Parks and Recreation Department will undertake outside of the park system for the preceding fiscal year.</p> <p>The playground inspection guidelines and forms have been updated so that all exercise equipment inspection information is captured and reported. The previous form reflected an exception-based reporting that only documented non-compliance items. The revised form includes indication of both compliance and non-compliance items of each exercise equipment amenity component type.</p>					

We are committed to addressing the recommendations in the audit report and the plan of actions presented above.

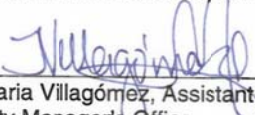
Sincerely,



 Xavier D. Urrutia, Director
 Parks & Recreation Department

09/06/18

 Date



 Maria Villagómez, Assistant City Manager
 City Manager's Office

9/6/18

 Date