



Highlights

Why OCA Did This Study

In accordance with the Office of the City Auditor's FY 2017 Work Plan, we conducted a performance audit of the street light repair program. Specifically, we evaluated the efficiency and effectiveness of the City's street light repairs.

Our audit objectives were to assess:

- Repair performance metrics;
- Standardization of operations;
- Inventory replacement parts and materials;
- Asset inventory; and
- Infrastructure planning.

What OCA Recommends

- Street Division should develop measurable performance metrics to improve efficiency, create data reliability controls. Also, the Division should coordinate with Fleet Services to increase the percentage of operational vehicles.
- Develop written policies and procedures to standardize and improve street light repair operations.
- Assess the feasibility of using portable electronic devices to automate repair records.
- Create and establish inventory controls for repair parts to help maintain adequate supply levels and reduce the risk of theft.
- Develop guidelines to maintain street light asset data and prioritize the hiring of positions that will update the data.
- Develop a long term street light management plan and define clear roles and responsibilities.

Management agreed to implement all of our recommendations.

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City of San Diego, Office of the City Auditor

Street Light Repair Audit

Standardized Operations, Analysis of Additional Performance Metrics and Interdepartmental Coordination Can Improve Street Light Repair Services

What OCA Found

FINDING 1: Based on our review, we found that Street Division's street light repair service does not operate efficiently. Specifically, the Division did not meet its one performance goal of repairing street lights in an average of 12 days during the past two fiscal years, and the information used to evaluate the goal was not reliable. Also, a lack of operational street light repair vehicles is hindering efficiency.

FINDING 2: Street light repair operations are not fully standardized and they rely on employees' institutional knowledge because there are no documented street light repair policies or procedures. Street light maintenance could be improved by establishing standardized procedures that include prioritizing repairs by problem type, and ensuring repair work is conducted in a geographically efficient manner. Efficiency could also be improved by utilizing field laptops to eliminate duplicate data entries and paperwork.

FINDING 3: Street Division does not have any inventory records for street light replacements parts and materials, such as light bulbs, fixtures, and poles. Without accountability for replacement parts and materials, Street Division cannot develop an automatic reordering process that maintains an adequate inventory level. The lack of inventory records also increases the risk of theft.

FINDING 4: Street light asset data is inaccurate and incomplete. Inaccurate asset information about street lights negatively affects the efficiency of repair operations because repair personnel do not always have the correct information about a street light when they arrive on site for repairs. Inaccurate street light asset information also hinders any future efforts to develop preventative maintenance plans.

FINDING 5: Lastly, we found the City has not developed a comprehensive plan addressing street light infrastructure challenges and department responsibilities. Effective management of street lights requires a high degree of interdepartmental coordination between five Department Directors, and there are no City or Department directives establishing coordination efforts. Instead, coordination efforts are based on individual initiatives. The City's also has hundreds of different fixture, lamp, and pole types, making repairs difficult.



Image Credit OCA and Google Maps.