



**City of Merced
Parks & Community Services
690 W. 16th St.**

**Joint Use – Unlocking the Playground:
Achieving Equity in Physical Activity Spaces**

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Creating Successful Joint use Partnerships!

.Must Have a Clear Vision on What You Strive for!

“To Create Community, through People, Parks & Programs”

.Need to Articulate the Mission-What You do?

“Parks & Recreation Promotes Health & Wellness”

“Provides Valuable Recreational Experiences”

“Fosters Human Development”

“Strengthens Safety and Security”

“Increases Cultural Unity”

.Clearly Define Values for all Policy Makers!

“Being Inclusive-Provide Equal Opportunity”

“Healthy Lifestyles”

“Fun and Celebration”

“Diversity of Experience”

“Personal Development”



Best Practices In Planning & Land Use

•Be Pro-active & Plan for the Future!

- “Study Future Trends in Your Specialty”
- “Be Involved In Professional Organizations”
- “Know Current Legislation that Affects You”

•Create Land Use Policies that Promote Joint use!

- “The Merced General Plan Recommends Joint use Priority”
- “The Parks & Open Space Master Plan Specifies Joint use”
- “South Merced Specific Plan Suggests Joint use”
- “Merced City School District Recommends Joint use”

**You Need to know & Understand Your Partner’s
Strategic Plan! Maximize Shared Resources!**



Best Practices In Communication

•Communicate the Vision to All!

“Start in-house with employees, co-workers, departments, divisions & volunteers”

“Educate Executive Management on Vision”

“Keep Your Priorities in Focus at All Times”

“Make Your Case Frequently—Ask, Ask, Ask”

“Squeaky Wheel Gets The Attention”

•Solicit Support!

“Elected Officials –Councils/Boards ”

“Appointed Officials”

“Local Non-profits”

“User Groups”

“Stakeholders”

•Articulate Vision, Goals & Objectives to Elected

“Clearly Define the Unmet Facility Needs”

“Define & Validate Health & Physical Benefits”

“Display Enthusiasm and Interest-be an advocate”

•Keep Your Mission in the Minds of Policy Makers

“Always Be Ready to Justify Outcome”

“Know the Key Indicators that Make Your Case”



Approach to Hot-Buttons Issues!

•Maintenance, Cost, Security/Safety, Liability

My approach is speak directly with the individuals who will make the recommendations to the decision makers. I found that establishing a good working relationship with these individuals greatly increases my chances of obtaining practical joint use agreements to share facilities for public use.

When the City has an interest in developing a joint use agreement, I generally write a letter stating the City's interest and ask for a lunch meeting to further discuss other party's interest in pursuing a joint use agreement.

Maintenance-I discuss the City's obligation to have transparency when spending public funds and the need to validate the proportioned shared cost based on the City's and partner's guaranteed use of the facilities.

My approach to shared cost is much the same. Each partner must share in the cost based on the recommended usage.



Approach to Hot-Buttons Issues!

- **Maintenance, Cost, Security/Safety, Liability Cont'd**

My approach to safety/security is that the City must follow State of California mandates for all public facilities. There isn't a choice in complying with ADA requirements or other mandates. All costs for land allocation, sidewalks, water, storm water, curbs, gutters, and street lights, must be shared. All agreements include engineer's estimates for construction, furniture, fixtures, program management, and contingencies.

In terms of liability, all joint use agreements include Indemnification and Hold Harmless clauses for each party. Most of our agreements are for 25 and 50 years terms with an automatic renewal clause at the end of each term.



Challenges!

- Getting individuals in authority to share in the decision-making process! The idea of many administrators at the top of organizations is they are the only ones who can be trusted with making major decisions. City, County, and Educators have been trained to protect their turf!
- Educating the administrators that we all serve the same community. We have the same citizens as clients. Each organization has a different area of public responsibility to provide a public service.
- Gaining agreements to be partners for the good of the community.
- Having financial commitments from all partners.
- Selling the benefits of joint use by expanding public use of area facilities is a win-win.
- Getting local politicians to set aside politics.



Successful Joint Use Partnerships!

Merced Union School District Agreements

“Parking lot/Gate with Golden Valley High \$25,000”

“New Gymnasium at Bellevue Ranch \$1.5 mill. Ea.”

“Community Sports Park (CP-42) \$3.5 mill. Ea.”

Merced City School District Agreements

“Tenaya Middle School Gym Floor \$25,000”

“Tenaya School Outdoor Lighted Courts \$50,000”

“Hoover & Rivera School Ball field Lights \$65,000”

“Rivera Middle School New Gym \$1.1 mill. Ea.”

“Child Development Agreement \$573,000 Annually”

•Parks & Community Services has exclusive scheduling rights for all City and Merced City School District sports fields. The City has use of four gymnasiums based on availability. The City schedules all public use of all District sports fields for all local sport groups under the Joint Use Agreement.

•City facilities are made available to the District at no cost. District facilities are available to the City at no cost. The High School District and City also share each other's facilities at no cost.



Lessons Learned

- **Know Your Limitations and Authority!**
- **Don't Over Commit!**
- **Verify Authority of Associate Partners!**
- **Validate Commitment In Writing!**
- **Seek Agreements to Share Costs and Benefits!**
- **Review, Review, Review Draft Agreement**
- **Confirm All Partners Know the Details!**
- **Seek Guaranteed Use When Possible!**
- **Avoid committing to long-term maintenance and capital improvement plans \$30,000 per year!**



Closing Thoughts!

- Individuals who work for the public and non-profit agencies should work for the public good. If people don't have the passion to be a champion for the people, then they may be in the wrong business.
- Whatever you recommend should benefit the people.
- We must not be tempted to seek personal rewards.
- We should keep in mind the people of California pay the taxes for all education and public facilities.
- The open space and facilities belong to the public.
- We are charged with the responsibility of providing safe and secure spaces to improve our health and wellness.
- I am pleased that the Merced City School District and the Merced Union High School District understand the needs and benefits to partnering with the City.
- The Superintendent of the High School District suggested legislation that would make all school grounds parks, which would reduce liability for the schools.