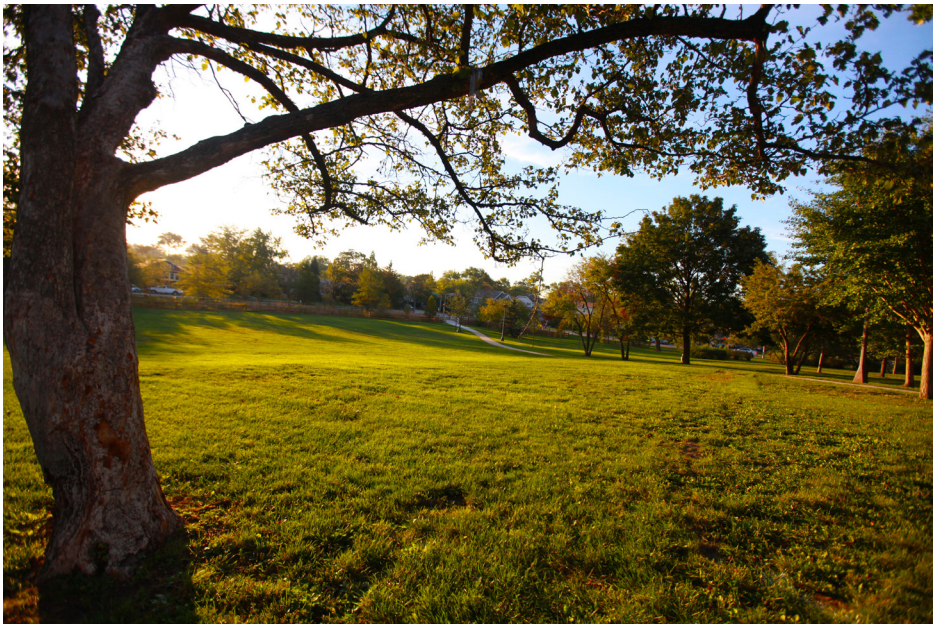
Comprehensive Outdoor Athletic Field Development & Operation Plan

The Park District of Oak Park, IL



Prepared by Heller and Heller Consulting, Inc. - March 2013

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Introduction

The Park District of Oak Park (PDOP) worked with Heller and Heller Consulting, Inc. (HHC) and PROS Consulting, LLC (PROS) to complete an Athletic Field Development and Operations Plan. The over-arching goal of the process is to produce a living document that will serve as a comprehensive plan for the Park District to use in outlining priorities and timelines for field improvements, improve field usability and, where possible, increase field asset capacity over a 10 year period. The consulting team and staff have developed this information, knowing the evolution of athletic field asset improvements is a process that requires time over multiple years.

Additional, supporting goals of the process include:

- Evaluation of field types for use
- Assessment of current field conditions and amenities, including input from user groups
- Analysis of current field care and improvement methods
- Analysis of current field allocation and scheduling systems and offer improvement strategies
- Provision of operational maintenance best practice standards
- Creation of a flexible planning tool that the PDOP can use to support short-term, mid-term, and long-term athletic field development, improvement and maintenance investments that are defendable and provide a high return on investment
- Establishment of a mechanism to define funding allocation, priorities and recommendations for future field capital improvements

The Park District continues to experience increasing demand for outdoor athletic fields without a correlating growth in the capacity of athletic field assets. The District is seeking opportunities to grow capacity, which this Plan addresses. In addition, ongoing maintenance has been challenging as a result of intensive use. The Plan addresses maintenance issues through an assessment of existing park sites, a review of current practices, and recommendations for best practice approaches. Current field conditions and recommendations for improvement were discussed during a series of user and staff focus groups and discussion with staff during site tours.

The elements of the Plan consist of:

- Athletic Field Site Assessment
- User And Staff Focus Group Summary Results
- Capacity Demand Analysis
- Maintenance Practices, Including Standards
- Comparison of Current Practices to Best Practices
- Comparative Information from Other Agency Practices
- Capital Priorities

Throughout the report, fields are categorized as either diamond fields or multi-purpose fields. Diamond refers to fields that support baseball and softball activities and include both an infield (ball mix/clay) and outfield (turf). Multi-purpose refers to fields that support activities like soccer, lacrosse, football and are entirely turf unless they overlap with a diamond due to the nature of the site and its configuration and limitations.

The deliverable for the project is the development of a comprehensive plan for staff, elected officials and PDOP affiliates that outlines the requirements, priorities, and responsibilities of each party in the maintenance scheduling and improvement of the fields. The Plan will also serve as a training tool and standard documentation for staff involved in maintenance practices. Ultimately, the Park District of Oak Park will utilize best practice approaches in the scheduling, permitting, and maintenance of athletic fields. This will result in the District's ability to use its resources efficiently and effectively. Furthermore, the recommendations and practices outlined in the Plan will result in assisting the District's fulfillment of its vision:

We strive to exceed the needs of our diverse community with a collaborative and innovative approach.

Executive Summary

The following summary briefly reviews each section of the report and provides a high level detail of information of key information, findings, and recommendations.

ATHLETIC FIELD SITE ASSESSMENTS

The field assessment includes a description of current field conditions, based on site visits completed July, 2012 at all park locations and District 97 school sites with ratings for both multi-purpose and diamond fields. Multi-purpose field ratings included the goal and mid-field areas. Diamond fields included an assessment of infields, outfields, backstops and sideline fences. Amenities included bleachers, player benches, drinking fountains and perimeter fences. Fields and amenities received scores between one and five, with a score of one representing excellent conditions and a score of five representing poor conditions.

Of the 19 multi-purpose fields rated, three fields were rated the highest score of 9 and three were rated with the lowest scores from 14 to 15. They were:

- Lindberg Middle (9)
- Maple Park Middle (9)
- Stevenson (9)

-

- Euclid Square (15)
- Fox Park West (14)
- Longfellow (14)

Of the 23 diamonds rated, the top three fields had a rating of 10 and the bottom three ranged from 16 to 19. They were:

- Euclid Square (10)
- Field Park South (10)
- Stevenson (10)

-

- Whittier Elementary (19)
- Hatch Elementary (16)
- Holmes Elementary (15)

Overall, diamond fields rated higher than multi-purpose fields. The complete listing of ratings is detailed within the body of the report.

USER AND STAFF FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY RESULTS

The following section outlines the summary of information from three focus groups, one staff group and two groups of athletic field users. The staff group included all staff members who are responsible for managing the various aspect of athletic field use, including maintenance, programming, and permitting. The stakeholder groups included athletic field user groups, including the school districts, WSSRA, and athletic affiliate groups.

Staff Group

The general feeling among the staff group indicates a need for clearer role definition between the PDOP and the user groups. Furthermore, the group feels there are times the affiliates change field locations on their own. There is a need for an effective rotation schedule and better communication from the groups. The balance between owner of assets (the District) and user of the assets (the affiliates) is out of balance as the user groups seem to make too many decisions about athletic field use. The PACT program was referenced as being beneficial to the relationship.

The staff members are challenged from excess demand for the fields and the resulting wear and tear on the turf. A suggestion would be for each affiliate to have a limit to the number of registrants in their program. There was general support for sports turf fields to help with improving capacity. It was also noted the installation of field turf still creates the need for ongoing maintenance.

Stakeholder Groups

There are opportunities for improvement. Though, most focus group members feel the communication efforts and permitting processes have generally gone well and improve from year to year. There are a few groups that feel as though the District should treat them more as customers. The group members recognize the challenge facing the District with increased demand for athletic fields. There is general satisfaction with the permitting process. However, the permitting process should include criteria to ensure the ability of the Park District to grow their own programs for the good of the entire community. Criteria can include the establishment of caps on league play and maximums on affiliate registrations.

It appears the division of responsibilities needs to be more clearly defined; however, some of the communication issues exist within the affiliate groups, from organization leaders to coaches. There is constant turnover among the groups, which makes the communication process more difficult.

From the user perspective, field maintenance is a concern, particularly from soccer. The group members rated multi-purpose fields as poor or average. Most significant issues are lack of good turf coverage and the presence of weeds. Diamond field users had a more favorable impression of the quality of maintenance of diamond fields. When comparing Oak Park fields to other fields in the area, the focus group members feel the quality of maintenance is better in other communities.

The groups support the notion of the District investing in sports turf, mostly for multi-purpose fields. This isn't a high priority for the baseball groups.

The groups did not know much about the District's sustainable practices, so there is an opportunity to provide more education to the groups. The user groups can become advocates of the District's practices. In addition, the maintenance practice section of this Assessment can also serve as a vehicle to educating groups.

GENERAL MAINTENANCE PRACTICES

This section of the report details maintenance practices and includes information about the following topic areas:

- Maintenance Standards
- Comparison of Best Practices to Current Park District of Oak Park Practices
- Detail of Maintenance Practices from other Agencies
- Integrated Pest Management Practices

Not included in the report is an Athletic Field Maintenance Manual intended for use by maintenance employees. This will be included in the upcoming staff training provided in consultation with the newly hired Athletic Field Manager. The manual can then be used for ongoing new employee orientation.

Maintenance Standards

This section outlines athletic field maintenance standards for diamond and multi-purpose fields. This information is a tool for staff to set standards for training and maintenance practices for all fields. The recommended maintenance standards are divided among three levels and two categories in each level. These categories are for ball diamonds (baseball and softball) and multi-purpose fields (soccer, football, lacrosse, etc.). Standards include turf coverage, mowing heights, aerification, seeding, weed coverage, pest management, field preparation work and a variety of other tasks.

Level 1 is for the premier fields that represent showcase athletic fields that typically have the highest level of competition played on the field. These fields will receive the highest degree of maintenance the Park District and its affiliates can choose to afford.

Level 2 consist of the majority of athletic fields; they are normally used for in-house programs or younger age travel leagues. The maintenance practices are similar but will have a decreased number of tasks, along with a decrease in materials used per field and associated cost.

Level 3 consists of the school sites. Maintenance on these fields depends on coordination with the School District and any written agreements in place.

Integrated Pest Management Practices

The Park District has an Integrated Pest Management Program Policy (IPM) which is currently under review. The IPM program was developed to help manage pest issues, maintain the quality

of the parks, and provide the safest environment for the user. The IPM section of the report outlines five sequential steps to work towards this goal. These include prevention and four control elements; Cultural, Mechanical, Biological, and Chemical. Chemical control is advocated as a last measure of control after all other elements are exhausted. Current practices include the use of Glyphosate in specific areas. Along with pest control, an effective weed control program is crucial in maintaining quality turf. A Biannual weed control program has been added to the IPM program. As part of this program, communication of the treatment information to the residents of Oak Park as well as the coordination of athletic schedules will be crucial in insuring a safe and effective program.

FIELD ROTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

This section of the report outlines recommendations for field rotations, in order to disperse specific areas of field use and the resultant wear and tear. As usage increases, the resting of turf space becomes increasingly difficult. A plan for the rotation of fields and/or mid-season field adjustments should be followed. Education and communication of this practice to the user will be a large part of the program. This summary provides details into how such a program can be administrated.

As part of the athletic field maintenance program the ability to rotate fields and provide mid-season field adjustments to negate wear are all necessary to achieve the District's goal of improved field playability. The following information outlines the list of recommendations for field rotations.

Game and/or multi-purpose practice field rotation and guidelines

- Soccer coaches should be instructed to hold practices perpendicular to the game field layout at all locations. This will lessen the wear on the goal areas.
- Goals should be removed during the week to allow for protection of turf in soccer goal areas.
- Coaches should be instructed to use unlined green space next to the field if available. Examples of these spaces are at the north end of Barrie Park near Garfield Street and at the north end of Carroll Park near Harvard Street.
- Field Rotations: specific guidelines are included in the body of the report

Mid-season field adjustments

- A mid-season re-alignment can lessen the wear in the high traffic goal and center-circle areas of the field. It also allows for these areas to begin the restoration process of aeration, seeding and sodding.

Field usage with the addition of a dedicated turf multi-purpose field

The addition of a dedicated full size (180' x 300') artificial turf field provides several opportunities for staff to lessen the number of practices and games held on other large fields in the District. With the use of permanent lighting or portable lights, the artificial turf field use could be extended on average two and one half hours longer each day (Monday thru Friday) or

the equivalent of 12.5 hours per week, 125 hours per season. It would allow an existing large field such as Barrie Park, Field Park, or Taylor Park to have the large field layout to be made into two smaller 90' x 150' fields. This would allow all the fields this size to lessen the number of practices or it would allow for a site to be rested for an entire growing season. A measurement for success of the athletic field maintenance program and field rotation will be a reduction in the number of yards of sod that is replaced compared to previous years. In 2011, slightly over 17,000 square yards of sod were replaced. In 2012 the number of yards replaced is estimated to be 12,700 square yards. This also results in environmental benefits such as reducing the amount of sod trucked in, less water for turf establishment, and less equipment time for sod installation.

COMPARISON OF CURRENT PRACTICES TO BEST PRACTICES

Staff completed a thorough listing of current maintenance practices and scheduled frequency of tasks. This information was used by the consultant team to compare to athletic field maintenance best practices. From these comparisons, additional maintenance practices were identified. These recommendations include weekly dragging, broadcast seeding, turf blankets, and mid-season re-alignments.

These practices result in approximately $11,170 in materials and supplies and 802 additional labor hours which represent the additional costs for existing practices. According to PDOP staff, the average hourly salary and benefits for full-time staff is $31.05. Seasonal staff hourly rate is $9.95. Assuming 80% of the work is completed by full-time staff, the total labor hour costs for these tasks is $19,922 for full-time staff labor hours and $1,565 for seasonal staff.

Materials and Supplies:	$11,170
Labor Hour Cost:	$21,487
Total:	$32,657

COMPARATIVE MAINTENANCE PRACTICES FROM SELECTED AGENCIES

The Comparative Maintenance Practices analyzes four recreation agencies. This comparison looks at population, operating budget, staff allocation for field maintenance, acreage, number of athletic fields, usage, and rental/cost recovery. Agencies selected included River Forest Park District, St. Charles Park District, and the Blue Valley Recreation Commission in Overland Park, Kansas. These agencies were selected as a result of their reputation for having well maintained athletic fields. The comparison focused on number of assets and employees and less on maintenance practices.

CAPACITY DEMAND DATA AND ANALYSIS

Utilizing the Capacity-Demands Standards Model, the capacity of the current facilities was modeled based on industry standards for each type of field and the available usage and permit data for 2012 as supplied by the District and its affiliates. This analysis required entry of data from the District's facility reservation system and scheduled games and programs. "Actual" practice hours were not included as this data was not tracked and therefore not available at the time the model was constructed. An analysis of the results of the model showed a pattern of overuse at several facilities, but also identified the need to collect additional "actual" use data and that "Facility" level permit data may not be a accurate measure of the actual use of an individual "Athletic Field". Based on the results of the Capacity Demand Standards Model the following is recommended;

- Assume 2012 to represent the baseline,
- Identify and implement processes to capture the number of hours of "actual" use of District athletic fields by District, affiliate and permitted programs.
- Update the Capacity Model on an annual basis with the most recent usage data.
- Analyze data collected to determine needed system improvements.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Athletic field capital improvements are identified within the report. The improvements are listed as short, mid and long term. The list includes:

Short Term 2013 to 2015

- Purchase maintenance equipment Water Reel, Aeravator, Deep Core Aeravator, and Mower
- Synthetic turf at Ridgeland Common (included in the existing Ridgeland Common project)
- Synthetic turf at Irving (partnership possibility with School District 97) anticipated $440,000. The Park District anticipates to share 50% of the expense for a new multi-purpose field
- Irrigation installation or improvements at Field, Longfellow, and Taylor for $60,000
- Laser grading Longfellow, Stevenson, and Barrie diamond fields $13,500
- Turf blankets for Barrie and Taylor $7,200

Mid Term 2016 to 2017

- Laser grading for Euclid Square, Field, and Maple for each multi-purpose and diamond field $30,000
- Irrigation at Carroll, Fox, and Euclid Square. $60,000 is earmarked for irrigation in the CIP and is recommended to go to those sites.

Long Term 2018-2019

- Synthetic field turf at Stevenson for both diamond and multi-purpose fields for $1,000,000. Stevenson is selected in favor of other parks as a result of the lights at this park. Stevenson already has $900,000 allocated for 2018 improvements, which can go toward complete renovation of fields including irrigation

Athletic Field Site Assessment

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Assessment is to provide a detailed evaluation of the athletic fields used by the Park District of Oak Park. This includes both Park District sites as well as School District 97 sites. The information is detailed by park and school location. In addition, specific elements of multi-purpose fields and diamond fields were assessed and assigned a score of their condition. This information is helpful in determining capital priorities. Information for the assessment is supplemented by work completed previously by Jim Fizzell, of James A. Fizzell & Associates, Ltd. In April of 2011, Fizzell prepared Turfgrass Management Calendars and Report of Site Inspection for five parks: Ridgeland Common, Field, Barrie, Lindberg, and Taylor Parks.

All athletic field sites currently being used for practice and programs indicate heavily used, and in most cases, overused fields. With fluctuating weather extremes similar to what we have experienced the past two years, overused fields will decline more rapidly as there is no ample window for the turf to recover. The two conditions combined create a downward spiral that makes consistent or improved maintenance of acceptable athletic sites very difficult.

The Park District has several diamond fields with new or recently renovated backstops, sideline fences and amenities; these fence poles and fence fabric are black vinyl coated. The older backstops show their age with bowed chain-link, missing or misaligned rails and end caps, and/or surface rust on the fence posts and fabric. However, the installation of these older backstops was of high quality as there are no fence post concrete footings showing signs of heaving and can remain serviceable for years to come.

As the Park District continues to upgrade the infrastructure, there will be a challenge to allocate the resources to maintain these amenities and to find the necessary resources if the District chooses to raise the maintenance standards to a higher level.

Below is a summary of the Multi-purpose fields with an evaluation of the goal areas and mid-field. Diamond fields include an assessment of the following:

- Infield
- Outfield
- Backstop and sideline fences
- Amenities; including bleachers, player benches, drinking fountains and perimeter fences.

The scoring criteria are based on a five point scale with 1 being the best and 5 being the poorest. Criteria definitions include:

Rating Value	*Condition*	*Description*
1	***Excellent***	Turf is healthy and growing, infield is crowned with no low areas and supporting amenities are like new.
2	***Good***	Turf shows minimal wear, infield has minor imperfections such as low areas, supporting amenities have no defects.
3	***Satisfactory***	Turf shows normal wear related to the time in the season, infield has normal playability with no bad hops from the ball hitting a lip, amenities are aged but are functional and safe.
4	***Fair***	Turf shows significant wear or weed cover, infield has numerous low areas or has lost its proper crown, amenities are rusted, bent, missing parts.
5	***Poor***	Turf has bare areas and large sections covered by weeds, the infield has severe lips, low areas, ruts or weed covered, amenities have exposed footings, bent, missing or broken parts.

Weed Cover rating consists of:

- Minimal
- Moderate
- Excessive
- Overgrown

Turf Cover rating consists of:

- Bare
- Sparse
- Average
- Thick

RATING ASSESSMENT

Multi-purpose Fields

Park Location	*Goal Area*	*Goal Area*	*Mid-Field*
Andersen Park	4	3	3
Barrie Park	3	5	4
Carroll Park (North)	5	4	4
Carroll Park (South)	n/a	n/a	n/a
Euclid Square Park	5	5	5
Field Park	4	5	4
Fox Park (West)	5	5	4
Fox Park (East)	4	4	4
Lindberg Park (North)	4	5	5
Lindberg Park (Middle)	3	3	3
Lindberg Park (South)	4	4	2
Longfellow Park	5	5	4
Maple Park (North)	n/a	n/a	n/a
Maple Park (Middle)	3	3	3
Maple Park (South)	3	3	4
Rehm Park	4	4	4
Ridgeland Common	4	4	3
Stevenson Park	3	3	3
Taylor Park	5	5	3

Diamond Fields

Park Location	*Infield*	*Outfield*	*Backstop*	*Sideline*
Barrie Park	3	4	3	3
Carroll Park	4	4	3	3
Euclid Square Park	3	5	1	1
Field Park (North)	2	5	2	2
Field Park (South)	3	5	1	1
Fox Park	3	3	3	3
Lindberg Park (North)	4	2	4	4
Lindberg Park (South)	3	2	3	4
Longfellow Park	3	4	3	3
Maple Park (North)	3	3	3	3
Maple Park (South)	3	3	3	3
Ridgeland Common (North)	3	3	4	4
Ridgeland Common (South)	3	3	4	4
Stevenson Park	3	3	2	2
Beye Elementary	n/a	5	3	3
Gwendolyn Brooks Middle	5	4	3	3
Hatch Elementary (Southeast)	5	4	4	n/a
Hatch Elementary (Northwest)	5	4	3	4
Holmes Elementary	5	3	3	4
Percy Julian Middle	4	3	3	4
Whittier Elementary (North)	5	4	5	5
Whittier Elementary (South)	5	4	5	5

Site Amenities

Park Location	*Bleachers*	*Player Benches*	*Drinking Fountain*	*Perimeter Fencing*
Andersen Park	4	n/a	1	3
Barrie Park	2	2	2	n/a
Carroll Park (North)	5	4	3	3
Euclid Square Park	1	1	1	n/a
Field Park	1	1	1	1
Fox Park (West)	3	3	2	n/a
Lindberg Park (North)	3	4	4	n/a
Lindberg Park (South)	3	3	3	n/a
Longfellow Park	2	2	2	3
Maple Park (North)	2	4	4	n/a
Maple Park (South)	2	4	3	3
Rehm Park	n/a	n/a	3	n/a
Ridgeland Common	4	3	3	5
Stevenson Park	1	1	2	3
Taylor Park	3	n/a	1	n/a
Beye Elementary	n/a	4	n/a	3
Beye Elementary	n/a	4	n/a	3
Gwendolyn Brooks Middle	n/a	5	n/a	3
Hatch Elementary (Southeast)	n/a	4	n/a	4
Hatch Elementary (Northwest)	5	4	n/a	4
Holmes Elementary	4	3	n/a	4
Percy Julian Middle	n/a	5	n/a	4
Whittier Elementary (North)	4	4	n/a	4
Whittier Elementary (South)	n/a	4	n/a	4

Below is the detailed assessment of each Park District and School District 97 athletic facility.

Site Assessment - Parks

Andersen Park

Andersen Park is located at 820 N. Hayes at Division, 3 blocks west of Austin Blvd. The Park includes a neighborhood center (featuring multi-purpose room and a kitchen), tot lot, rest rooms, playgrounds, splash pad, multi-purpose field, and drinking fountain.

Andersen Park athletic field consists of one small multi-purpose field. The turf is a combination of Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass. The turf is thin at the north goal and mid-field areas and sparse at the south goal area. Despite the thin turf the weed cover is minimal. This low weed cover may be a result of a large section of the mid-field being sod cut and replaced last fall.

There is one three row bleacher with wooden seats that is need of replacement. The wood is rough and splintered; the metal frame is rusted and would require extensive preparation and painting.

There is a perimeter fence that has been recently painted and is in good shape. It will not need to be replaced for several years, but it will require re-painting every few years.

Andersen Park Recommendations:

This field would benefit from an aggressive core aeration program; a minimum of two times per year. Aera-vation and seeding should be done weekly. The preferred timing and frequency of the core aeration is a minimum of twice per year, in March/April and November. If the weather permits or irrigation is available, core aeration can also be done in mid-June and mid-August when games/practice are not taking place.

An aera-vator is a tractor mounted implement that does not pull cores of soil; instead, it inserts a solid tine into the soil and vibrates, which breaks up the compacted soil structure while depositing seed into the soil. A water source would be beneficial to allow the turf to be watered, which aids the existing turf recovery, and to germinate grass seed during periods of drought and during the summer months when the field is not being programed.

Goal Area

- Turf quality: low area or depressions where the goalie stands
- Bluegrass/ryegrass combination
- Thin - overseed
- South goal area has some sparse areas

Mid-field

- Sodded mid field is stunted and compacted
- There is transition lip between existing turf and re-sodded area
- Weed cover is minimal

Player Benches and Bleachers

- Bleachers are 3-row wood benches w/ splinters
- Bleachers are metal frames that need painting
- No player benches

Other

- Rest rooms, drinking fountain in the park

Barrie Park

Barrie Park is located at 127 Garfield Street, 3 blocks west of Austin Blvd. directly south of I-290 expressway. Barrie Park includes a playground, tot lot, drinking fountain, sled hill, ball diamond with an overlapping multi-purpose field, and a .32 mile walking path.

Barrie Park athletic fields consist of a large size multi-purpose field and an overlapping ball diamond. The turf consists of a combination of Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass. The turf thickness is bare in the south goal area of the multi-purpose field to sparse in the mid-field/center field/ north goal area and average in left field. Weed cover is moderate consisting of knotweed, clover and plantain. Knotweed is an indicator plant of compacted soil.

The outfield/north goal area soil surface shows the presence of calcined clay. Staff indicated the outfield had been given a process called-drill and fill. This is a process of boring into the existing soil and adding calcined clay to help alleviate compact and improve drainage. The mid-field areas have some low areas/depressions with the appearance that it has settled from the original grade. There is an irrigation system servicing the turf area. Also, Jim Fizzell's general condition summary of Barrie Park in April 2011 notes the compaction of the lower soils horizons which prevents drainage of what water does penetrate the top six inches resulting in a muddy field.

The diamond field infield has depressions/low areas around home plate, pitchers rubber, the first

base area, and behind second base. There are weeds growing along the backstop fencing that needs to be controlled.

There are a series of three row aluminum bleachers located on the sides of the diamond field that are in good shape. The player benches are a vinyl-coated metal and they too are in good shape.

The drinking fountain is conveniently located behind the back stop with rest rooms across the street. The backstop and sideline fence has a black vinyl coated fence fabric that is in good condition, there are some fence ties that are missing.

Barrie Park Recommendations:

This south goal area should be sodded in order to create a favorable playing surface. The entire multi-purpose field and outfield would benefit from the aggressive core aeration program referenced previously, a minimum of two times per year and weekly aera-vation and seeding. The low areas in the mid-field can be addressed by top-dressing these areas each year.

The irrigation system should be inspected and adjusted monthly. There was standing water in the valve box behind first base; several of the heads were not rotating properly which nullified the benefits of having an automated irrigation system. Fizzell's general condition assessment also noted issues with irrigation. He noted the system had been operating, but not regularly.

The infield should be re-graded to restore the proper grade or crown to the infield. In addition more ballfield mix needs to be added to fill the low areas. The infield would benefit from seasonal maintenance consisting of adding batters clay bricks in the batter boxes and around the pitching rubber. These bricks help control the depressions from forming around home plate and around the pitching rubber.

The backstop, and sideline fencing would benefit from a monthly inspection and repair procedure in which missing and fabric ties are replaced monthly as there are missing ties along the first base sideline fence. This can help reduce long term damage to the fence.

A field that is as large as this can have practices held perpendicular to the game field. This spreads the wear across a larger area of the field and saves the game field goal areas.

An additional recommendation is to follow the Turfgrass Management Calendar prepared by Jim Fizzell. The Calendar includes a 12 month schedule of maintenance activities and standards for athletic fields. The Calendar outlines a month to month task list, which applies to all athletic fields. Examples of tasks include items such as park inspections, core aerification, mowing heights, fertilization, seeding, and watering.

MULTI-PURPOSE FIELD

Goal Area

- South goal area turf density is thin (sled hill side)
- North goal area-drill and fill with calcined clay turf density is thicker

Mid-field

- Turf is sparse
- Some low areas and depressions
- Irrigation - some heads are not turning
- Moderate weed cover consisting of -clover, plantain, knotweed

Player benches and Bleachers

- None present

DIAMOND FIELD

Infield

- Low areas at the batting, pitchers area and 1st base area
- Weeds along the fence line
- Re-grade and crown

Outfield

- Irrigation - valve box leaking on first base side, some heads not spinning in center field
- Moderate weed cover (clover/plantain)
- Thin turf in areas

Fencing

- Some missing fence ties along 1st base side
- Player Benches and Bleachers
- Vinyl coated player benches
- 3-row aluminum bleachers –all on concrete surfaces

Other

- Rest rooms are across the street, drinking fountain located by the diamond field

Carroll Park

Carroll Park is located at 1125 South Kenilworth at Filmore, 2 blocks west of Oak Park Avenue and 1 block north of Roosevelt Road. The Park includes an office, multi-purpose room, rest room, tot lot, playground, ball diamond, multi-purpose field, and drinking fountain.

Carroll Park athletic fields consist of two small size multi-purpose fields and a ball diamond that overlaps with the multi-purpose field. The turf consists of a combination of Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass. The turf thickness is sparse throughout the outfield and multi-purpose field areas. The center of the multi-purpose field had been previously sodded but it is worn out. There are depressions and bare areas in left field; manhole and utility covers in deep center field.

The weed cover is excessive with weeds consisting of knotweed and plantain. On the south side multi-purpose field, the turf density is good with weed cover as minimal. The infield is nearly flat with a low area along the third base area. There are weeds and grass growing along the backstop, sideline fencing and five feet in around the entire perimeter that needs to be controlled.

There are a couple of three row wooden bleachers located on the side of the diamond field that are in poor shape. There is not a hard surface under the bleachers or player benches. The player benches have a fiberglass seat; they are in satisfactory shape.

The drinking fountain and rest rooms are located in the middle of the park. The sideline fences are in good condition. There is a six foot high perimeter fence along the north and west sides of the park that is in satisfactory shape. The field location next to a school creates high use and significant impact on turf.

Carroll Park Recommendations:

Carroll Park diamond field should be considered for a renovation similar to Euclid Square Park; however, the turf outfield should be included in any renovation project.

After a renovation project the fields would benefit from an aggressive core aeration program; a minimum of two times per year and weekly aera-vation and seeding. Weed control in the turf needs to be addressed in order for the turf to get established. A water source would be beneficial to allow the turf to be watered which aids the existing turf recover and to germinate grass seed during periods of drought and during the summer months when the field is not being programed. The south side multi-purpose field would also benefit from the prescribed aeration and seeding program like the other athletic fields.

The infield would benefit from additional ballfield mix being added and graded and shaped to

restore the proper crown. The low area around third base should be removed with the addition of ballfield mix. The weeds along the backstop and sideline fences and around the perimeter of the infield need to be controlled either mechanically or chemically.

The backstop, sideline and perimeter fencing would benefit from a monthly inspection and repair procedure, where missing rails and fabric ties are replaced monthly. This can help reduce long term damage to the fence. The addition of a hard-surface bleacher and player bench pads similar to Euclid Square Park would reduce the need to trim or weed under these amenities.

DIAMOND FIELD

Infield

- Low area along third base side
- Weeds (knotweed) encroaching 5 feet into the infield

Outfield

- Dry no irrigation
- Holes/depressions in left field
- Moderate weed cover (knotweed/plantain)
- Sparse turf-overseed and aerate

Fencing

- New sideline fence fabric for players
- Back stop poles have been welded to repair crack
- Player Benches and bleachers
- Fiberglass player bench covers-satisfactory
- 3 row wood bleacher –poor shape

Other

- Rest rooms and drinking fountain available in the middle of the park

MULTI-PURPOSE FIELD

Goal Area

- Turf density is sparse

Mid-field

- Holes and low areas/ top-dress and seed
- Dry no irrigation

Euclid Square Park

Euclid Square Park is located at 705 West Filmore, one block east of Oak Park Avenue and one block north of Roosevelt Road. Euclid Square includes a tot lot, ball diamond, tennis courts, multi-purpose field that overlaps with the ball diamond, and a drinking fountain.

Euclid Square Park athletic fields consist of a small size multi-purpose field inlaid in the outfield of the ball diamond. The outfield was renovated Fall of 2010- through the Spring of 2011. The park and athletic fields at Field Park were renovated in 2007. The turf consists of a combination of Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass. The turf thickness is bare throughout left and center field to sparse in right field. Weed cover is excessive with a high percentage of the weeds being knotweed. Knotweed is an indicator plant of compacted soil. The outfield soil surface shows the presence of calcined clay. Staff indicated the outfield had been given a process called-drill and fill. This is a process of boring into the existing soil and adding calcined clay to help alleviate compaction and improve drainage.

The diamond field infield had recently been renovated and demonstrates a properly crowned infield. There are several low areas including inside the batter box areas, and in front of the pitching rubber. There are weeds growing along the backstop fencing that need to be controlled. The concrete gutter along the sideline fence is full of ballfield mix that needs to be removed.

There are a series of three row aluminum bleachers located on the sides of the diamond field that are relatively new and are a part of the ballfield renovation project. The aluminum player benches were a part of the renovation project and are also newer. The drinking fountain is conveniently located behind the back stop. The backstop and sideline fence has a black vinyl coated fence fabric that is in excellent condition.

Euclid Square Park Recommendations:

This outfield and multi-purpose field should see a complete renovation that would include controlling all of the existing weeds, having the soil amended and roto-tilled, graded for the proper crown and then sodded. Upon the completion of this work, an aggressive maintenance program of aeration and seeding needs to be followed. A water source would be beneficial to allow the turf to be watered which aids the turf to recover and to germinate grass seed during periods of drought and during the summer months when the field is not being programed.

The infield would benefit from seasonal maintenance consisting of adding batters clay bricks in the batter boxes and around the pitching rubber. These bricks help control the depressions from

forming around home plate and around the pitching rubber. The concrete gutter should have the ballfield mix removed after each time it rains and deposits mix into the gutter. The mix can be raked back into the infield. The infield lip behind first and third base should be removed and the proper transition between the turf and infield mix be restored.

The backstop and sideline fencing would benefit from a monthly inspection and repair procedure in which missing rails and fabric ties are replaced monthly. This can help reduce long term damage to the fence.

DIAMOND FIELD

Infield

- Low areas in front of the pitcher's mound and in batter area (use clay blocks)
- Weeds (knotweed) present along backstop, infrequent dragging
- Recently renovated-nicely crowned
- New concrete gutters along sideline fence/ gutters are filled with Ballfield mix a maintenance issue

Outfield

- Dry- No irrigation source
- Low quality turf-bare to sparse
- Drill and fill-calcine clay at the surface

Fencing

- New

Player Benches and Bleachers

- New player benches
- New 3-row aluminum bleachers (missing end cap on 1st base side bleacher)
- New trash receptacles

Goal Area

- Turf density is bare

Mid-field

- Dry-No irrigation source
- Turf is bare to sparse, large presence of knotweed-compaction
- Surface presence of turface (calcified clay)-drill and fill
- Renovate

Player Benches and Bleachers

- None present

Other

- Rest rooms and drinking fountain available

Field Park

Field Park is located at 935 Woodbine at Division, four blocks east of Harlem Avenue. Field Park includes a neighborhood center, rest rooms, tot lot, playground, drinking fountain, splash pad, shelter, and a bocce court.

Field Park athletic fields consist of one small size and one large size multi-purpose field with two ball diamonds that overlap the athletic fields. The turf consists of a combination of Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass. The turf thickness is bare to sparse throughout the outfield areas and both multi-purpose fields. Weed cover is excessive with a high percentage of the weeds being knotweed. There are irrigation quick-connects in the outfield; however, they were not being used.

The diamond field amenities had recently been renovated and create a good model for standardization. On the northeast diamond there are several low areas approximately ½" deep around the batters and pitching area. The grass sideline areas are worn and require extra maintenance and watering. The concrete gutter along the sideline fence is full of ballfield mix that needs to be removed. The backstop and sideline fence has a black vinyl coated fence fabric that is in good condition except for the missing middle fence rail and some missing fence ties.

There are low areas around the pitching rubber on the southwest ball diamond. There are weeds growing along the backstop fencing that needs to be controlled. There are three-row aluminum bleachers located on the sides of the diamond field that are new. The aluminum player benches were a part of the renovation project and are also newer. The backstop and sideline fence have a black vinyl coated fence fabric that is in good condition, though there are missing fence ties along the first base side. The drinking fountain is conveniently located behind the southwest back stop.

Jim Fizzell completed a Turfgrass Management Calendar and Report of Site Inspection for Field Park in March, 2011. He noted the conditions at Field Park have been a concern for several years. Being next to a school, the park is used continuously throughout the year.

Field Park Recommendations:

This outfield and multi-purpose field need a complete renovation that would include controlling all of the existing weeds, having the soil amended and roto-tilled, graded for the proper crown and then sodded. Upon the completion of this work, an aggressive maintenance program of aeration and seeding needs to be followed. The water source should be utilized to help the turf recover and to germinate grass seed during periods of drought and during the summer months when the field is not being programed.

The infield would benefit from seasonal maintenance consisting of adding batters clay bricks in the batter boxes and around the pitching rubber. These bricks help control the depressions from forming around home plate and around the pitching rubber. The concrete gutter should have the ballfield mix removed after each time it rains and deposits mix into the gutter. The mix can be raked back into the infield. Additional diamond field mix needs to be added to both diamonds, to restore the proper field crowning. It appears the infield mix has settled since their initial installation.

The backstop and sideline fencing would benefit from a monthly inspection and repair procedure where missing rails and fabric ties are replaced monthly. This can help reduce long term damage to the fence.

An additional recommendation is to follow the Monthly Turfgrass Calendar prepared by Jim Fizzell.

DIAMOND FIELD – NORTHEAST

Infield

- Batter and pitching areas have low areas
- Infield is crowned to the north creating a lot of overland sheet flow. Review a contour map of the park and confirm the drainage pattern for storm-water. The water may be coming from the asphalt playground between the park and the school building. If this is confirmed,work with the School District to develop some bio-swales to intercept the water coming off the asphalt play surface and detain it to lessen the run-off.

Since there are two ball fields that have a soccer field over-layed in the outfields, trying to change the grade of the land and maintain playable fields would be extremely difficult.

- Grass sideline areas are worn away
- Routine maintenance is required to remove the diamond field mix from the concrete gutters

Outfield

- Turf is very sparse to bare

Fencing

- Middle support rails were removed- vandalism

Player Benches and Bleachers

- Dugout is a concrete slab
- Concrete gutter system to drain
- Aluminum player benches
- 3-row aluminum bleachers on concrete slab

DIAMOND FIELD - SOUTHWEST

Infield

- Re-grade, high near first base, low near pitching area
- Turf areas worn out
- Weeds along outfield transition area

Outfield

- Turf is sparse to bare – same as northeast field
- Quick connect irrigation available, need to re-set the valve box to allow the cover to fit securely

Fencing

- Missing ties on first base sideline fence

Player Benches and Bleachers

- Concrete dugout floors with aluminum player benches
- Concrete gutters to drains
- 3-row aluminum bleachers

Other

- Irrigation quick connects available
- Rest rooms, drinking fountains available

MULTI-PURPOSE FIELD

Goal area

- Bare
- Soil is compacted

Mid-field

- Little turf-sparse
- Soil is compacted
- Weeds: knotweed/clover/dandelions/ plantain

Player Benches and Bleachers

- None present

Other

- Irrigation quick connects available
- Rest rooms and drinking fountains available

Fox Park

Fox Park is located at 624 South Oak Park Avenue at Jackson Street, two blocks south of Madison Street. Fox Park includes a neighbor center with an office, two multi-purpose rooms, rest room and the park has a tot lot, playground, diamond field, drinking fountains, and splash pad.

Fox Park athletic fields consist of one multi-purpose field and a ball diamond with an overlapping multi-purpose field. The turf consists of a combination of Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass; there is a greater percentage of ryegrass that is resulting in clumpy grass condition. The turf thickness is sparse throughout the outfield and multi-purpose field areas and bare in the four goal areas. On the west side multi-purpose field the weed cover is

excessive and consists of knotweed and plantain. The east side multi-purpose field has moderate weed cover consisting of the same types of weeds.

The infield is nearly level with a lot of infield mix along the sideline fence, is burying the bottom fence rail, and needs to be removed. There is a low area between the infield and outfield transition area around the infield perimeter. There are weeds and grass growing along the backstop and sideline fencing that needs to be controlled. There is an Ash tree growing near the third base sideline fence. Consideration should be given to removing this tree for player safety concerns.

There are a series of five row aluminum bleachers located on the side of the diamond field that are in satisfactory shape. There is not a hard surface under the bleachers or player benches. The player benches are also aluminum and they too are in good shape. The drinking fountain is conveniently located behind the back stop.

The backstop and sideline fence are in good condition. The backstop poles are painted black but the paint is chipping and will need to be repainted in the near future. Behind home plate there are several missing ties that need to be addressed. There is a perimeter fence along the south and west sides of the park that is in satisfactory condition.

Fox Park Recommendations:

After aerating and sodding bare goal areas, the fields would benefit from an aggressive core aeration program; a minimum of two times per year and weekly aera-vation and seeding. A grass seed mixture that has a greater percentage of Kentucky bluegrass would be beneficial to help fill the bare areas and reduce the extent of clumps in the turf. Weed control in the turf needs to be addressed in order for the turf to get established. A water source would be beneficial to allow the turf to be watered which aids the existing turf recover and to germinate grass seed during periods of drought and during the summer months when the field is not being programed.

The infield would benefit from additional ballfield mix being added and it being graded and shaped to restore the proper crown. The low area around the infield perimeter would be removed and the proper transition between the turf and infield mix be restored when the additional ballfield mix was added and re-graded. The weeds along the backstop and sideline fences and around the perimeter of the infield need to be controlled either mechanically or chemically. The ballfield mix that has built-up along the sideline fences need to be removed and returned to the center of the infield.

The backstop, sideline and perimeter fencing would benefit from a monthly inspection and repair procedure, where missing rails and fabric ties are replaced monthly. This can help reduce long term damage to the fence.

The addition of a hard-surface bleacher and player bench pads similar to Euclid Square Park would reduce the need to trim or weed under these amenities.

MULTI-PURPOSE FIELDS- TWO

Goal Area

- Turf is bare

Midfield Area

- Turf is sparse and clumpy
- Knotweed -compaction
- Aggressively overseed

Player Benches and Bleachers

- None present

DIAMOND FIELD

Infield

- Add mix in order to have a smooth transition to the outfield
- Grade and crown the infield
- Move infield mix from fence back into the infield
- Knotweed along the fence edges

Outfield

- Dry-no irrigation present
- Turf is sparse in areas-compacted

Fencing

- Poles need painting
- Missing ties on backstop behind home plate
- Bottom rail is buried in infield mix
- Poles and fabric are in good shape
- Player Benches and Bleachers
- Five row aluminum bleacher – some seats are bent
- Aluminum player benches
- No hard surface material under the player benches or bleachers

Other

- Rest rooms and drinking fountains available

Lindberg Park

Lindberg Park is located on Greenfield between Marion & Woodbine, one block east of Harlem Avenue, and one block south of North Avenue. The Park includes handicapped rest rooms/ comfort station, concessions (seasonal), tot lot, ball diamonds, multi-purpose fields, tennis courts, drinking fountain, and trial gardens of native flowering prairie plants.

Lindberg Park athletic fields consist of two large and one small size multi-purpose fields and two ball diamonds that partially overlap with the multi-purpose fields. The turf consists of a combination of Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass. The turf thickness is average to thick throughout the outfield and multi-purpose fields areas in the south section of the park. On the north side small multi-purpose field, the turf cover is average to sparse moving east to west across the field. On this same field the weed cover is moderate to excessive moving east to west. Knotweed, clover and plantain make up most of the weeds in this area. Weed cover in the center and south side multi-purpose fields have minimal weeds consisting of dandelions, plantain, clover, knotweed and crabgrass.

The fields are irrigated, however, there are some irrigation heads that are malfunctioning and not turning properly.

The southeast diamond field has a grass infield that shows worn areas outside the dugout entrances. There are low areas around the pitcher's mound and home plate. There is an excessive amount of weeds growing in the infield around the entire perimeter of the field that need to be controlled.

The original backstop does not meet the needs of the current users and extension poles have been strapped to permanent poles and netting was added. The netting has rips and holes. The fence poles and rails are rusted, the bottom rail around the dugouts are missing. Fence ties are missing in various locations and the fence fabric is bent and curled from pitching and batting practice.

The northwest ballfield also has a grass infield. There are low areas around first, third and home base that allow ponding of water; the pitching mound also has several low areas. There are weeds and grass growing along the backstop and sideline fencing in addition to the knotweed that is growing in the infield mix. All of these should be controlled.

Similar to the southeast diamond the original backstop does not meet the needs of the current

users. Extension poles have been strapped to permanent poles and netting was added. The netting has rips and holes. The fence poles and rails are rusted. Fence ties are missing along the third base side and the fence fabric is bent and curled from pitching and batting practice.

There are mixes of three and five row aluminum bleachers located on sides of the diamond fields and are in satisfactory shape. The player benches are aluminum and are satisfactory. The drinking fountains are conveniently located behind the diamond fields.

Jim Fizzell prepared a Turfgrass Management Calendar and Report of Site Inspection for Lindberg in March, 2011. He noted at that time, the fields were generally quite good and noted the drainage is better than some of the other clay loam fields.

Lindberg Park Recommendations:

The fields would benefit from a program of core aeration, a minimum of two times per year and aera-vating between the core aeration process. Over seeding before and after each playing season is recommended. Weed control in the turf needs to be addressed in the north side of the park in order for the turf to get established. At a minimum, a monthly inspection and repair of the irrigation system is recommended. Watering is critical in helping to maintain healthy turf especially on fields that are over used, it is crucial that the system is working properly.

In addition, the irrigation head location should be checked so that they are not protruding in the field of play. The small north multi-purpose field went from average turf cover to bare from July to September due to use; core aerating and sodding at the end of the season will be necessary on this field.

A field that is as large as this can have practices held perpendicular to the game field. This spreads the wear across a larger area of the field and saves the game field goal areas.

The infield would benefit from seasonal maintenance consisting of adding batters clay bricks in the batter boxes and around the pitching rubber. These bricks help control the depressions from forming around home plate and around the pitching rubber. The infield would benefit from additional ballfield mix being added and it being graded and shaped to restore the proper crown. The northwest infield along the first base line and around first base will require extra ball mix to restore it to grade. The northwest field behind the third base area requires some extra ball mix as well as the infield trails off. The weeds around the perimeter of the infield need to be controlled either mechanically or chemically.

The backstops need to be redesigned so that the strapped on poles and netting are not required, both the backstop and sideline fence fabric are curled and bent and need to be replaced. On the southeast sideline fencing, a support wire was used in place of a bottom rail; this has allowed the fence fabric to curl more. The wire should be replaced with a rail post. The backstop and sideline fencing would benefit from a monthly inspection and repair procedure, where missing rails and fabric ties are replaced monthly. This can help reduce long term damage to the fence.

An additional recommendation is to follow the Turfgrass Management Calendar prepared by Jim Fizzell.

DIAMOND FIELD NORTHWEST

Infield

- Turf infield
- Ball mix needed in baseline and around 1st and 3rd base areas as they are low
- In addition low areas in batter areas
- Infield drops off past third base
- Weeds in the infield (knotweed)

Outfield

- Irrigation provided however heads are protruding behind 2nd base
- Some heads are not rotating

Fencing

- Fence fabric is bent and ripped in places
- Missing fence ties along third base line
- Poles are sound but have areas of rust/prep and paint
- Backstop poles were modified to accept netting

Benches and Bleachers

- Player benches and bleachers are aluminum

DIAMOND FIELD SOUTHEAST

Infield

- Pitcher's mound needs to be re-graded
- Low areas in batters areas and dugout entrance
- Re-grade to crown the infield
- Grass infield- worn outside the dugout

Outfield

- Turf is average is thick in coverage
- Weeds are minimal

Fencing

- Fence Fabric is bent from pitching/batting practice
- No bottle rail on dugout fence
- Wire used on outside fence instead of a bottom rail
- Extensions strapped on /netting is ripped
- Posts are rusted in areas

Player Benches and Bleachers

- Aluminum Player benches - some missing end caps
- 3 and 5 row bleachers, 3 row have aluminum seats, metal footboards, 5 row are all aluminum

MULTI-PURPOSE FIELDS (THREE)

Goal Area

- Turf quality shows normal wear
- Multi-purpose field marking system however markers are protruding

Midfield

- Where the irrigation system is working the turf is healthy with minimal weeds
- North turf areas are thin excessive weeds

Player Benches and Bleachers

- 5 row bleachers, one set is bent

Longfellow Park

Longfellow Park is located on 610 South Ridgeland Avenue at Jackson Blvd. two blocks south of Madison Street. The park includes a neighborhood center with an office, two multi purpose rooms, lobby and elevator and an accessible restroom, the park includes tot lot, playground, splash pad, sand play area, diamond fields, tennis courts (lighted), basketball court, outdoor ice rink (weather permitting), and drinking fountains.

Longfellow Park athletic fields consist of a medium size multi-purpose field and an overlapping ball diamond. The turf consists of a combination of Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass; there is a greater percentage of ryegrass that is resulting in clumpy grass condition. The turf thickness is sparse throughout the outfield and multi-purpose field areas and bare in the two goal areas. Weed cover is moderate outside the center area that had been sodded; the weeds consist of knotweed and plantain.

The soccer goal anchors are slightly raised above the soil surface and need attention.

The infield is nearly level with several low areas including in front of the pitching rubber and around third base. There is a lip between the infield and outfield transition area behind second and third base. The ballfield mix has built up along the sideline fence that needs to be removed. There are weeds and grass growing along the backstop fencing that needs to be controlled.

There are a series of five row aluminum bleachers located on the side of the diamond field that are in good shape. The player benches are also aluminum and they too are in good shape. The drinking fountain is conveniently located behind the back stop.

The backstop and sideline fence has a black vinyl coated fence fabric that is in satisfactory condition. The backstop poles are painted black but the paint is chipping and will need to be repainted in the near future. The fence fabric along the third base side is curled at the bottom as a result of batting and pitching practice along the fence, In addition there is a section of the fence along the third base side that is missing the bottom rail that allows the fence fabric to curl more easily.

There is a perimeter fence that is in satisfactory except along the third base side which is very curled due to batting and pitching practice. The fence also consists of some bent fence poles, missing rails, ripped fabric and missing fence post caps.

Longfellow Park Recommendations:

This field would benefit from an aggressive core aeration program of minimum of two times per year, weekly aera-vation, and seeding. A grass seed mixture that has a greater percentage of Kentucky bluegrass would be beneficial to help fill the bare areas and reduce the extent of clumps in the turf.

A water source would be beneficial to allow the turf to be watered, which aids the existing turf recover and to germinate grass seed during periods of drought and during the summer months when the field is not being programmed. Sod needs replacement at the north goal area. The goal anchors are slightly raised above grade and should be lowered to prevent any potential trips.

The infield would benefit from additional ballfield mix being added, graded, and shaped to restore the proper crown. The infield lip around the perimeter should be removed and the proper transition between the turf and infield mix be restored. The weeds along the backstop and sideline fences and around the perimeter of the infield need to be controlled either mechanically or chemically. The ballfield mix that has built along the sideline fences need to be removed and returned to the center of the infield.

The backstop, sideline and perimeter fencing would benefit from a monthly inspection and repair procedure where missing rails and fabric ties are replaced monthly. This can help reduce long term damage to the fence.

DIAMOND FIELD

Infield

- Low areas at the batting and third base area
- Infield mix is built up along the dugout fence- re-grade and move mix back
- Lip around the perimeter
- Knotweed along the edges
- Nearly level-re-grade and crown

Outfield

- Dry no irrigation source
- Moderate weed cover (knotweed/plantain)
- Sparse turf in areas

Fencing

- Some missing fence ties along 1st and 3rd base side
- Missing bottom rail along 3rd base side
- Fencing is in good shape

Player Benches and Bleachers

- Five row all aluminum bleacher
- Asphalt surface in dugout
- Aluminum player benches

MULTI-PURPOSE FIELD

Goal Area

- Turf density is bare
- Sod that was placed in goal areas are wore out
- Goal anchors visible and are protruding…top-dress to level or lower the anchors

Mid-field

- Dry no irrigation source
- Low areas and bumpy-seeded with a higher content of bluegrass
- Re-sodded center section in December 2011- the area is dormant
- Turf is sparse –moderate weed cover consisting of knotweed, plantain

Player Benches and Bleachers

- None present

Other

- Rest room and drinking fountain available

Maple Park

Maple park is located on 1105 South Maple, on Harlem Avenue, 1/2 block north of Roosevelt Road. The Park includes handicapped rest room/comfort station, tot lot, playground, two ball diamonds, tennis courts, drinking fountain, and a dog park.

Maple Park athletic fields consist of three small size multi-purpose fields and two ball diamonds. The turf consists of a combination of Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass. The turf thickness is average throughout the outfield and multi-purpose field areas. On the north side multi-purpose field the weed cover is moderate and consists of knotweed, plantain, dandelions, clover and crabgrass. The center and south side multi-purpose fields have minimal weed cover consisting of the same types of weeds.

The infield is nearly level with an oversized infield. There is a low area around the pitchers and home plate area on both diamonds. On the north diamond there is a lip behind first base. There are weeds and grass growing along the backstop and sideline fencing that needs to be controlled.

There are three row aluminum bleachers located on the third base side of the north diamond and first base side of the south diamond that are in satisfactory shape. The player benches are wood and/or fiberglass covered wood benches with either cracks in the fiberglass or splinters in the wood that are less than satisfactory.

The drinking fountain is not conveniently located for the athletic fields.

The backstop and sideline fence fabric are in good condition. The backstop and sideline poles are rusted. Behind home plate and sideline fence of the north diamond there are missing ties allowing a section of the first base side fence to pull away from the rails. The south diamond also has several missing fence ties and post caps.

Maple Park Recommendations:

The fields would benefit from a program of core aeration; a minimum of two times per year and seasonal seeding. Weed control in the turf needs to be addressed in the north side of the park in order for the turf to get established. A water source would be beneficial to allow the turf to be watered, which aids the existing turf recover and to germinate grass seed during periods of drought and during the summer months when the field is not being programed.

The infield would benefit from additional ballfield mix being added and it being graded and shaped to restore the proper crown. The lips around the perimeter of the infields on both ball diamonds need to be removed. The weeds along the backstop and sideline fences and around the perimeter of the infield need to be controlled either mechanically or chemically. The ballfield mix that has built up along the sideline fences need to be removed and returned to the center of the infield.

The backstop, and sideline fencing would benefit from a monthly inspection and repair procedure, where missing rails and fabric ties are replaced monthly. This can help reduce long term damage to the fence.

DIAMOND FIELD (NORTH)

Infield

- Low areas in batters area
- Lip at outfield transition- large lip behind 1st base
- Infield is flat/ re-grade and crown
- Weeds by fencing

Outfield

- Dry-no irrigation
- Moderate weed cover-crabgrass, plantain, knotweed, dandelions, clover
- Sparse turf
- Low areas behind short center

Fencing

- New black vinyl fabric fencing on backstop
- Re-used the old backstop & fence line poles and rails
- Poles and rails have rust - prep and paint at the time of fabric replacement
- Missing fence ties on some support rails
- Missing backstop pole caps
- Sideline fence fabric was not replaced-missing ties at the bottom

Player Benches and Bleachers

- 1st base side player bench-fiberglass covered board with rips
- 3rd base side has wood player bench
- 3 row all aluminum bleacher on third base side only-no bleachers on 1st base side
- Spectator seating only on one side

DIAMOND FIELD (SOUTH)

Infield

- Low areas in batters area
- Lip at outfield transition
- Infield is flat/ re-grade and crown
- Knotweed in infield

Outfield

- Dry no irrigation
- Moderate weed cover- see north field
- Sparse turf

Fencing

- New black vinyl fabric fencing on backstop only/ sideline fabric is old
- Re-used the old backstop/fence line poles and rails
- Poles and rails have rust / prep and paint at the time of fabric replacement
- Missing fence ties on some support rails
- Broken fence post cap 3rd base side

Player Benches and bleachers

- 1st base side-fiberglass covered board
- 3rd base side has wood covered player bench
- 3 row aluminum bleacher on 1st base side
- Splinters on wood bench
- Spectator seating on one side only

Other

- Rest rooms and drinking fountain available in the middle of the park

MULTI-PURPOSE FIELDS (THREE)

Goals Area

- Turf density is sparse
- 90 x 100 field has slopes making it difficult for games – practice area only

Mid-field

- Turf is sparse

Player Benches and Bleachers

- None present

Rehm Park

Rehm is located at 515 Garfield on East Avenue (directly south of I-290 expressway at East Avenue). Rehm Park includes an all-purpose field, three tennis courts, two sand volleyball courts, a playground with play equipment, sand play area, outdoor pool, and a hand operated train track.

Rehm Park athletic field consists of one small multi-purpose field. The turf is a combination of Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass. The thickness is thin at the west goal and mid-field areas and sparse at the east goal area. Despite thin turf, weed cover is minimal. The low weed cover in the center of the field may be a result of sod being cut and replaced last fall. The area outside the replaced sod is excessive. The field is relatively flat and should be crowned to aid in drainage. The east side goal area had a four inch deep rut that is about two feet long that should be filled with topsoil. There is a manhole cover along the north side of the field near the middle of the field. There is a padded cover placed on top of the cover but it is in poor shape and should be replaced.

There are no bleachers or player benches at this location, and the drinking fountain is not easily accessible to the field participants.

Rehm Park Recommendations:

This field would benefit from an aggressive core aeration program; a minimum of two times per year and weekly aera-vation and seeding. This field would benefit from being graded to develop a crowned center field to assist in drainage. On the short term the field would benefit from top-dressing the low areas located in the mid-field areas, as these low areas hold water and add stress to the turf. A water source would be beneficial to allow the turf to be watered which aids the existing turf recover and to germinate grass seed during periods of drought and during the summer months when the field is not being programed.

The north side has a man-hole cover as an obstacle that needs to be recovered to provide fall protection. This should be checked regularly so as not to allow the exposed metal lid.

Goal Area

- Turf density is sparse at the east end and bare at the west end
- East side of the field has a 4" rut in goal area
- The center of the field had been sodded the length of the field

Mid-field

- Low areas/top-dress
- Re-sodded center section in December 2011- the area is dormant/thin
- Weeds in non-sodded areas-clover, plantain, knotweed
- North side of the mid-field has a man-hole covered with turf-carpet, it needs replacing to insure safety

Player benches and Bleachers

- None present

Other

- Rest room and drinking fountains not conveniently located

Ridgeland Common

Ridgeland Common is located on 415 West Lake Street (at the corner of Ridgeland and Lake Street). Ridgeland Common has an outdoor pool, indoor seasonal ice/arena, indoor playground, dog park, rest rooms, two lighted diamond fields, sled hill, and drinking fountains.

Ridgeland Common athletic fields consist of one large size multi-purpose field and two ball diamonds that are lighted and that overlap both each other and the large multi-purpose field. The turf consists of a combination of Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass. The turf thickness is average to sparse throughout the outfield and multi-purpose field areas. Weed cover in the outfields/multi-purpose field is moderate with weeds consisting of dandelions, plantain, and knotweed. The fields are irrigated, however there are some irrigation heads that are malfunctioning and not turning properly.

The southeast diamond field has low areas around the pitcher's rubber and home plate. There is an excessive amount of weeds growing around the entire infield fencing and some along the perimeter of the infield that need to be controlled.

The original sideline fence does not meet the needs of the current users. Extension poles have been strapped to permanent poles and netting was added; the netting has rips and holes. The fence poles and rails are bent, rusted, and some rails are missing. Fence ties are missing in various locations and the fence fabric is bent and curled from pitching and batting practice.

The northwest ballfield has low areas around each of the bases that allow ponding of water. There are weeds and grass growing along the backstop and sideline fencing in addition to the knotweed that is growing in the infield mix; all of these should be controlled.

Similar to the southeast diamond the original backstop does not meet the needs of the current users and extension poles have been strapped to permanent poles and netting was added. The netting is rubbing into the ash tree behind the backstop. The fence poles and rails are rusted. Fence ties are missing along the third base side and the fence fabric is bent and curled from pitching and batting practice. A bottom rail is not used along the dugout areas; instead a support wire is used that provides less support.

There are mixes of three- and five-row aluminum bleachers located on sides of the diamond fields that are in satisfactory shape. Some of the foot boards are bent and are in need of repair. The player benches are aluminum and are satisfactory. The drinking fountains are conveniently located behind the diamond field. The lighting system dates back to 1962, pole positioning is poor with a pole at the foot of the sled hill, the poles should be checked for stress cracks. The fixtures are not energy efficient and fixture positioning should also be checked.

The perimeter fence is in poor shape and no longer meets the needs of the field. The section of fence in the northeast corner of the athletic field has been modified with netting to contain home run balls traveling on the sidewalk or on to Lake Street. The fence at the bottom of the sled hill is bent and curled.

Jim Fizzell completed a Turfgrass Management Calendar and Site Inspection for Ridgeland Common in March, 2011. He noted the condition of Ridgeland Common was in the best condition of all of the fields examined during that time period.

Ridgeland Common Recommendations:

The field complex is in need of an extensive overhaul from the irrigation system, the lighting system and all of the fencing. With this type of an extensive overhaul, a complete renovation should be considered to include the addition of synthetic turf. Synthetic turf will allow for more games/practices to be scheduled at this location and ease the use on other athletic sites. Until a decision is made about the extent of renovating the site, the fields would benefit from a program of core aeration; a minimum of two times per year and aera-vating between the core aeration process. A minimum of over seeding before and after each playing season is recommended.

Weed control in the turf needs to be addressed in order for the turf to get established. At a minimum a monthly inspection and repair of the irrigation system is recommended. Watering is critical in helping to maintain healthy turf especially on fields that are over used, it is crucial that the system is working properly. In addition the irrigation head location should be checked so that they are not protruding in the field of play.

The infield would benefit from seasonal maintenance consisting of adding batters clay bricks in the batter boxes and around the pitching rubber. These bricks help control the depressions from forming around home plate and around the pitching rubber. Both infields would benefit from additional ballfield mix being added and it being graded and shaped to restore the proper crown. The northwest infield perimeter needs to have the lip removed. The weeds around the perimeter of the infield also need to be controlled either mechanically or chemically.

The backstops and sideline fences need to be redesigned so that the strapped on poles and netting are not required. Both the backstop and sideline fence fabric are curled and bent and need to be replaced. A support wire on the sideline fencing should not be used, instead install a bottom rail and fasten the fence fabric with ties. The backstop and sideline fencing would benefit from a monthly inspection and repair procedure, where missing rails and fabric ties are replaced monthly. This can help reduce long term damage to the fence.

DIAMOND FIELD NORTHWEST

Infield

- Lip around the infield
- High and low areas-re-grade
- Grass behind home plate next to back stop

Outfield

- Irrigated/some zones not working, some heads are not turning

Fencing

- Re-enforcement wire on backstop verses rails
- Fencing from 1962, repainted in 2010
- Backstop netting is rubbing into Ash tree

Player Benches and Bleachers

- Concrete flooring in dugouts with aluminum player benches-some end caps are missing
- Bleachers 3-row– mix of aluminum seats and metal footboards,
- Third base side bleachers the footboards are bent

Other

- Lighted fields mercury vapor
- Irrigation is available there are some malfunctioning zones, some heads are not turning
- Weed cover is moderate
- Light poles are padded
- Athletic facilities are all fenced

DIAMOND FIELD SOUTHEAST

Infield

- Concrete gutter along sideline fence

Outfield

- Irrigated-sprinkler heads are not turning
- Moderate weed cover

Fencing

- Fence fabric curling
- Missing support rails
- Fence post bent
- Straps holding net poles to overhang

Player Benches and Bleachers

- Player benches missing end caps
- 3-row bleachers on first base side and 5-row bleachers on 3rd base side
- Aluminum seats with metal frames- some rust on frames

MULTI-PURPOSE FIELD

Goal Area

- Thin with weeds- plantain, knotweed, clover
- Compacted-aerate and overseed

Mid-field

- Had been re-sodded last fall
- Sod is stunted, thin, compacted soil
- Depressions/low spots
- Sprinkler heads, some are protruding
- Areas with moderate weed cover

Other

- Used as a dog park on a weekly bases
- Drinking fountains available

Stevenson Park

Stevenson Park is located at 49 Lake Street, three blocks west of Austin Blvd. The Park includes a neighborhood center with a teen center, office, multi-purpose room, rest room and the park includes a skate park, half-court basketball area, tot lot, playground, a diamond field with an overlapping multi-purpose field, and drinking fountains.

Stevenson Park athletic fields consist of a lighted medium size multi-purpose field and an overlapping ball diamond. The turf consists of a combination of Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass; there is a greater percentage of ryegrass that is resulting in clumpy grass condition. The turf thickness is sparse throughout the outfield and multi-purpose field areas. Weed cover is minimal with the greatest concentration along the south side of the multi-purpose field.

The diamond field has several low areas including inside the batter box areas, in front of the pitching rubber and around second base. There is a lip between the infield and outfield transition area behind first and third base. There are weeds and grass growing along the backstop fencing that needs to be controlled. The concrete gutter along the sideline fence is full of ballfield mix that needs to be removed.

There are a series of three-row aluminum bleachers located on the first base side of the diamond field that are in good shape. There is an excessive amount of weeds in the gravel behind the bleachers. The player benches are also aluminum, and they too are in good shape. The drinking fountain is conveniently located behind the back stop.

The backstop and sideline fence has a black vinyl coated fence fabric that is in satisfactory condition. The backstop poles are painted black, but the paint is chipping and will need to be repainted in the near future. The fence fabric along the third base side is curled at the bottom as a result of batting and pitching practice along the fence. In addition there is a section of the fence along the third base side missing the bottom rail that allows the fence fabric to curl more easily. There is a perimeter fence that is in satisfactory condition. The fence consists of some rusted and bent fence poles and some of the top rails are bent.

Stevenson Park Recommendations:

This field would benefit from an aggressive core aeration program at a minimum of two times per year with weekly aera-vation and seeding. A grass seed mixture that has a greater percentage of Kentucky bluegrass would be beneficial to help fill the bare areas and reduce the extent of clumps in the turf. A water source would be beneficial to allow the turf to be watered which aids the existing turf recover and to germinate grass seed during periods of drought and during the summer months when the field is not being programed.

The infield would benefit from additional ballfield mix being added and being graded and shaped to restore the proper crown. The concrete gutter should have the ballfield mix removed

after each time it rains and deposits mix into the gutter. The mix can be raked back into the infield. The infield lip behind first and third base should be removed and the proper transition between the turf and infield mix be restored.

The backstop, sideline and perimeter fencing would benefit from a monthly inspection and repair procedure where missing rails and fabric ties are replaced monthly. This can help reduce long term damage to the fence.

An additional recommendation is to follow the monthly calendar completed by Jim Fizzell.

DIAMOND FIELD

Infield

- Lips behind 1st and 3rd base
- Low areas by second base
- Low areas in front of pitching rubber – batters area

Outfield

- Thin /dry – over seeding is needed
- Minimal weed cover

Fencing

- Fence fabric vinyl coated
- Sideline fence along 3rd base bent/curled from pitching and batting practice
- Missing bottom rail 3rd base side
- Backstop poles have chipped paint

Player Benches and Bleachers

- 3 row aluminum bleachers
- Concrete dugout surface

Other

- Lighted field metal haloid
- Concrete gutter system- full of Ballfield mix
- ADA ramp for accessibility
- Rest rooms available at east end of the park

MULTI-PURPOSE FIELD

Goal Area

- Turf is sparse
- Surface is clumpy needs seeding to reduce this condition

Mid-field

- Minimal weeds
- Low spots along railroad track side of the field
- Turf density sparse
- Ryegrass (bunch type/clumps)

Player Benches and Bleachers

- None present

Taylor Park

Taylor Park is located on 400 West Division at Ridgeland. The Park includes: comfort station/ rest room, tot lot, youth playground, multi-purpose field, tennis court, picnic area, sledding hill, drinking fountain, and a floral display. The park is divided into a lower area that is recreational, and an upper area that contains a multi-purpose field.

Taylor Park athletic field consists of one large multi-purpose field. The turf is a combination of Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass. The turf thickness is sparse at the west goal, bare at the east goal and has a mid-field area that is average. The center of the field that has been sodded in the past has minimal weed cover. The perimeter of the field has excessive weed cover including a lot of clover. This is an irrigated field yet during the assessment there was standing water around some of the irrigation heads that indicate the system needs adjustment or repair. This field is not crowned and leveled like a conventional field as it is sloped to the east. This would be more of a concern if the field was used for High School or College games, but that level of play is not programmed at this site.

There are two five-row bleachers with metal seats that are in good shape; however, the footboards are rusted and the bleacher frames are bent. A rest room and multiple drinking fountains are located at this site, though the rest room and two drinking fountains are not conveniently located. These should be located within visual and easy hearing distance.

Jim Fizzell completed a Turfgrass Management Calendar and Report of Site Inspection for

Taylor in April, 2011. At that time, he noted the field contained several areas with good turfgrass, particularly around the multi-purpose field, but the multi-purpose field itself has experienced problems with thin covering of grass and presence of knotweed.

Taylor Park Recommendations:

This field would benefit from an aggressive core aeration program; a minimum of two times per year and weekly aera-vation and seeding. On an irrigated field such as this, broadcast seeding with spreader in the goal areas on a weekly schedule will also help to thicken the stand of grass. The use of a seed-aid product would assist in mid-season grass seed germination by allowing the soil moisture to remain in the soil longer verses evaporating rapidly. (A product such as Penn-mulch can be used for this purpose).

The irrigation system needs adjustment to prevent ponding of water at the surface. A monthly irrigation audit should be conducted to ensure that all of the irrigation heads are rotating properly and to check for leaking valves or irrigation heads that can cause a waste of water and wet areas on the field.

A field that is as large as this can have practices held perpendicular to the game field. This spreads the wear across a larger area of the field and saves the game field goal areas.

Placing the bleachers on concrete pads will reduce the amount of time required to trim the grass around and under the bleachers. It will also help protect the bleachers from damage as the mower operators tend to try and push the bleachers weekly when mowing. The pushing of the bleacher can result in bent frames and seats.

There is a lower level open space area at Taylor, adjacent to Ridgeland Avenue, mentioned as an option for field space. This area is not suitable for an additional field as it abuts a sledding hill and wet area.

The topography of the space is such that drainage is an issue and a wet area exists along the eastern edge of the park.

An additional recommendation for Taylor is to follow the schedule for monthly maintenance, as outlined by Jim Fizzell.

Goal area

- Sod installed last fall
- Recently reseeded
- Some standing water—irrigation adjustments needed
- Use penn mulch to aid water retention

Mid-field

- The area around sprinklers need to be top-dressed
- Uneven surface
- Mid field re-sodded last fall and is in good condition
- Sides that were not sodded have areas with excessive weed cover-clover, plantain, crabgrass

Player Benches, Goals and Bleachers

- Permanent goal anchors found and are flush to the surface
- Bleachers are 5-row aluminum seats with steal footboards
- Some rust on the frames/braces no concrete bleacher pads
- Goals stored against tennis fence
- No player benches on site

Other

- Rest rooms available in the park
- Drinking fountains available in the park

Scoville Park

Passive Recreation

- Terrain is sloped
- Irrigation has issues –not working properly
- Weeds-crabgrass, knotweed and chickweed

COMMENTS

This area would not be conducive for athletic activities as the park is mostly passive in nature, aside from tennis court use. Athletic fields would conflict with the passive nature of the park. Additionally, the park slopes, resulting in the topography not being desirable for organized athletic use. Scoville is a signature park within the system, located in the center of the Lake Street business district. It is the site of many community events held throughout the warmer months of the year. Again, athletic field use conflicts with these events.

Austin Gardens Park

Passive Recreation

- Outdoor theater area
- Theater stage suffocated the turf
- Compaction in front of the stage
- Tree crown cover would not be conducive for field sports

COMMENTS

The character and nature of Austin Gardens does not support athletic activities. The park is designed toward more passive use, aside from the outdoor theater use. Additionally, it lacks parking. A tenet of good park systems is to have some level of acreage devoted toward passive use. Historically, Austin Gardens has been a passive space. The assumption is the community would want its current passive nature to continue.

Site Assessment - School District Athletic Fields

The following assessments include School District 97 fields. The fields are used by the Park District, but are not owned or maintained by the District.

Mills Park

Passive Recreation

- Topography would be challenging-uphill slope

COMMENTS

Similarly to Scoville and Austin Gardens, Mills Park is not conducive for athletic activities because of its passive use, topography, and lack of parking. It historically has been a park of passive use.

Beye Elementary School

Beye Elementary School athletic fields consists of a multi-purpose field and two back stops, the backstops do not appear to be programmed, instead it appears to have been converted to multi-purpose fields.

The turf consists of a combination of Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass; there is a greater percentage of ryegrass that is resulting in clumpy grass condition. The turf thickness is sparse throughout the outfield and multi-purpose field areas and there are bare areas with depressions where they are using the ball diamond and the base areas are wore out. The soil is hard and compacted. Weed cover is excessive and consists of knotweed and plantain.

The two back stops have wood player benches with exposed footings and should be replaced. The backstop is 10 feet tall with no overhang, the poles and fabric are painted gray but is chipped and rusting. There is a perimeter fence that is in good shape.

Beye Elementary School Recommendations:

This field would benefit from an aggressive core aeration program; a minimum of two times per year, weekly aera-vation, and seeding. A grass seed mixture that has a greater percentage of Kentucky bluegrass would be beneficial to help fill the bare areas and reduce the extent of clumps in the turf.

Goal Area

- Sodded in fall
- Turf is sparse

Mid-field

- Turf is sparse and clumpy
- Weed cover is excessive with clover, plantain

Other

- Wood border has exposed rebar along the third base side

Whittier School

Whittier Elementary School athletic fields consist of a small multi-purpose field and two back stops.

The turf consists of a combination of Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass; there is a greater percentage of ryegrass that is resulting in clumpy grass condition. The turf thickness is sparse throughout the outfield and multi-purpose field areas except in the areas that were sodded last fall. These sodded areas maintain an average turf cover. The soil is hard and compacted. Weed cover is excessive and consists of knotweed and plantain in the areas that were not sodded.

The two back stops have wood player benches with exposed footings and the wood is splintered; the benches should be replaced. The north backstop is 8 feet tall with no overhang while the south backstop is 10 feet tall with no overhang; the poles and fabric are painted green but is chipped and rusting with some of the rails being bent. The fence posts have numerous exposed footings where the fence posts have heaved due to the winter frost. The sideline fences have no bottom rails or wire and the fabric is curled. There are numerous missing fence ties.

The infields have a lot of weed and crabgrass overgrowth. The north infield has 2-3 inch ruts from having the field dragged when it was too wet.
There are wooden three row bleachers with a rusted middle frame that are in poor condition.

Whittier School Recommendations:

This field would benefit from an aggressive core aeration program; a minimum of two times per year, weekly aera-vation, and seeding. A grass seed mixture that has a greater percentage of Kentucky bluegrass would be beneficial to help fill the bare areas and reduce the extent of clumps in the turf.

The backstops, sideline fences, player benches and bleachers should be replaced.

Normal maintenance needs to be increased at this location with routine infield dragging and weed control to have a safe playing experience. The infield needs additional diamond field mix and for the infield to be graded and crowned.

BALLFIELD – NORTH

Infield

- Low areas at the batting, pitchers area
- Rough ridges in the infield from dragging when the infield was wet
- Re-grade and crown

Outfield

- Depression and holes in the turf
- Sparse turf

Fencing

- Concrete fence footings exposed
- Fabric is damaged, missing ties along first base side
- Backstop needs replacing
- Sideline fence footings are exposed

Player Benches and Bleachers

- Player benches Wood planks-splinters
- 3-row wood bleachers have missing braces replace

BALLFIELD SOUTH

Infield

- Low areas at the batting, pitchers area and 1st base
- Knotweed 15' into infield
- Re-grade and crown

Outfield

- Depression and holes in the turf-left field
- Sparse turf in areas-weeds; plantain, clover

Fencing

- Concrete fence footings exposed along first base side
- Missing ties along first base side
- Backstop poles need painting (green)

Player Benches and Bleachers

- Player benches Wood planks-split
- 3-row wood bleachers

MULTI-PURPOSE FIELD

Goal Area Score

- Turf is bare in areas

Midfield Area Score

- Soccer area was sodded-thin
- Turf is sparse
- Turf has excessive weed cover-Knotweed -compaction

Hatch Elementary School

Hatch Elementary School athletic fields consist of a small multi-purpose field and two back stops. The turf consists of a combination of Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass. The turf thickness is sparse throughout the outfield and multi-purpose field areas, except in right field of the northwest diamond field where the turf is nearly bare. Weed cover is moderate and consists of knotweed and plantain in the areas that were not sodded.

The two back stops have wood player benches with exposed footings. The wood is splintered, and the benches should be replaced. The southeast backstop is 12 feet tall with no overhang, while the northwest backstop is 10 feet tall with an overhang; the poles and fabric are painted green but is chipped and rusting. The sideline fences have no bottom rails or wire and the fabric is curled. There are numerous missing fence ties. Some fence posts are leaning. The perimeter fence and northwest backstops have trees growing into the fabric.

The infields have a lot of weeds along the perimeter. The third base area of the south east ballfield is low. In addition there is a lip near the first and third base area. The northwest infield has ridges from having the field dragged when it was too wet. There are deep holes dug near first, second and home plate.

There is a wooden three row bleachers with rotted wood seats and rusted middle frame that is in poor condition. The southeast diamond field's player benches are not placed behind a protective fence. This represents a safety concern. The northwest diamond field player benches are behind a fence; however there is some rotted wood on the player benches. The southwest corner has 12 foot high fencing to deflect balls from going into the adjacent pumping station.

Hatch Elementary School Recommendations:

This field would benefit from an aggressive core aeration program; a minimum of two times per year, weekly aera-vation, and seeding. The backstops, sideline fences will need to be replaced in the near future. The player benches and bleachers should be replaced or temporary repairs made as soon as possible.

Normal maintenance needs to be increased at this location with routine infield dragging and weed control to have a safe playing experience. The infields needs additional diamond field mix, and the infield graded and crowned. The west side perimeter fence should have the overgrowing trees pruned back.

BALLFIELD SOUTHEAST

Infield

- Lip along 1st and 3rd base area
- Minor ingrowth of knotweed
- Re-grade and crown

Outfield

- Depression and holes in the turf-left field
- Weed cover is moderate

Fencing

- Paint backstop green
- Exposed concrete footings at the entrance

Player Benches and Bleachers

- Player benches metal- no sideline fence

DIAMOND FIELD NORTHWEST

Infield

- Minimal infield lip
- Re-grade and crown

Outfield

- Depression and holes in the turf-left field
- Sparse turf in left and center fields, nearly bare in right field

Fencing

- Missing ties along the 3rd base side fence
- Fence poles and fabric are rusted
- Trees are in the backstop

Player Benches and Bleachers

- Player benches have sideline fencing
- Player benches wood – some rotted planks

Other

- Designated - Zero waste field

Gwendolyn Brooks Middle School

Gwendolyn Brooks Middle School athletic fields consist of a small multi-purpose field and back stop.

The turf consists of a combination of Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass. The turf thickness is sparse throughout the outfield with the center of the multi-purpose field being bare. The playing surface is uneven with depressions and holes; there is buried concrete in the southeast corner of the outfield. The soil is hard and compacted. Weed cover is excessive and consists of knotweed and clover.

There are two vinyl covered metal player benches; the bench on the third base side is bent in the middle and should be replaced. The backstop is 10 feet tall with no overhang; the poles and fabric of the backstop and the sideline fence have minor rust but are in good shape. There is a tree growing into the backstop.

A quarter of the infield is overgrown with knotweed; it is difficult to determine the transition zone from the infield to the outfield. The infield is flat with several tire ridges in the mix from dragging the field when it was too wet. There are stones in the infield mix. There is 8 inch tall grass growing in the backstop fencing that needs to be removed.

There is a five foot perimeter fence with some minor rust; this school site has the best perimeter fencing of any of the schools that were evaluated.

Gwendolyn Brooks Middle School Recommendations:

This school site would benefit from a complete field renovation program consisting of soil modification and sodding. Upon its renovation an aggressive core aeration program; a minimum of two times per year and weekly aera-vation and seeding would be required.

The diamond field infield is flat and undefined, additional diamond field mix needs to be added and graded to re-establish the crown. During this process the transition between the infield and outfield would need to be re-established. The stones need to be removed from the infield mix.

BALLFIELD

Infield

- Compacted infield mix
- ¼ of the infield is overgrown with knotweed
- Rocks in the infield
- Ridges in the infield from the last time a tractor/vehicle that dragged the field

Outfield

- Holes and depressions
- Large bare areas other turf is thin
- Weed cover is excessive-clover, knotweed
- Hard to distinguish the transition area between the infield and outfield

Fencing

- Tree is growing into the backstop
- Player Benches and Bleachers
- Player benches are vinyl coated, bent in the middle on 3rd base side

Holmes School

Holmes Elementary School athletic fields consist of a small multi-purpose field and back stop.

The turf consists of a combination of Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass. The turf thickness is average throughout the outfield and multi-purpose field areas that were sodded last fall except some bare areas where the outfielders stand. The soil is hard and compacted. Weed cover is minimal and consists of knotweed and plantain in the areas that were not sodded.

The back stop has wood player benches that should be replaced. The backstop is 10 feet tall with no overhang; the poles and fabric are painted green but are chipped, rusting and missing fence post caps. The sideline fences have numerous missing fence ties along the top rail. There are trees and shrubs growing into the fence in the player bench area.

The infields have a lot of weed from not being maintained. The third base area is low and needs ballfield mix to level it. The infield has a nice existing crown.

There are wooden three row bleachers that are in poor condition.

The perimeter fence is painted green and is chipped and rusted. There are gaps in the top rail and missing ties.

Holmes School Recommendations:

This field would benefit from an aggressive core aeration program; a minimum of two times per year, weekly aera-vation, and seeding.

This diamond field holds the most potential of the school sites. The diamond field has an existing crown. It just requires normal maintenance to be increased at this location with routine infield dragging and weed control to have a safe playing experience. The player benches and bleachers should be replaced.

BALLFIELD

Infield

- Weedy-hasn't been dragged in a while

Outfield

- Holes in the outfield
- Low spots in left field
- Some areas sodded

Fencing

- Missing fence post caps
- Missing ties at both the 1st and 3rd base sides
- Exposed footing at the entrance
- Needs to be prepped and repainted green
- No bottom rail

Player Benches and Bleachers

- Bleachers are 3-row wood-need replacing

Other

- Trees growing into the sidelines of player area

Goal Area

- Turf is sparse, bare areas where goalie stands

Midfield Area

- Large areas of the soccer area was sodded

Irving Elementary School

Irving does not have an athletic field, though it has potential for a joint partnership with School District 97 for the installation of a turf field. Currently, the area is asphalt. The advantage of this partnership opportunity is additional capacity for the system would be created. The cost sharing is projected to be $400,000 for a U10 field of 114' by 180' with no lighting.

Longfellow Elementary School

During the field assessment, the field at Longfellow was being renovated. As a result, the field was not available for an assessment.

Percy Julian Middle School

Percy Julian Middle School athletic fields consist of a small multi-purpose field and back stop.

The turf consists of a combination of Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass. The turf thickness is sparse throughout the outfield and multi-purpose field, with clumps of ryegrass making the surface uneven. Weed cover is moderate and consists of knotweed.

There are two vinyl covered metal player benches; the bench on the first base side is extremely bent in the middle from people using it to climb over the perimeter fence; it should be replaced.

The backstop is 10 feet tall with an overhang that is in good shape. The player bench areas are overgrown with trees making the area difficult to use.

The infield is flat with lips around first, third and home plate. There is grass growing around the home plate area that needs to be removed. There is a three foot perimeter fence on the east and south sides that is overgrown with weeds and trees.

Percy Julian Middle School Recommendations:

This field would benefit from an aggressive core aeration program; a minimum of two times per year, weekly aera-vation, and seeding.

The diamond field infield is flat, additional diamond field mix needs to be added and graded to re-establish the crown. During this process the transition between the infield and outfield would need to be re-established with the lips removed and the grass removed from around home plate.

The trees and weeds need to be removed from the players' area fence to allow this area to be used safely. The players' bench on the first base side needs to be replacing so that the players can use it.

DIAMOND FIELD

Infield

- Lips near the first, third and home plate area
- Grass is growing around the home plate area

Outfield

- Turf is clumpy with ryegrass
- Weed cover is moderate

Fencing

- Trees is growing into the sideline and perimeter fences

Player Benches and Bleachers

- Player benches are vinyl coated, bent in the middle on 1st base side
- No bleachers are present

User and Staff Focus Group Summary Results

The following section outlines the summary of information from three focus groups, one staff group and two groups of athletic field users. The information lists the questions and the responses from the focus group participants, followed by an overall summary of general themes from the responses. The staff group included all staff members who are responsible for managing the various aspect of athletic field us, including maintenance, programming, and permitting. The stakeholder groups included athletic field user groups, including the school districts, WSSRA, and athletic affiliate groups.

Staff Group

Are the roles and responsibilities clearly differentiated among, staff and contractual staff, and affiliates related to athletic field maintenance?

- There are always gray areas. We do some of the aerification. We allow the contractor to do the cutting. We do overseeding. The affiliates ask a lot of questions about soccer goal placement and lining of the fields. Chad has roles, and Revenue and Grounds have roles. Chad drags the diamonds and then baseball says you should drag our fields. There is a need for organizational memory among affiliate groups.
- There is a disconnect among the District and the affiliates.
- We have been asked to put in a field that won't fit.

- There is not full documentation of affiliate use.
- Part of the problem is a lack of planning and a lack of communication. We need to have a plan of how to rotate the fields. A de-brief at the end of the season would be helpful for the next season.
- A lot of the affiliates change their field dimensions.
- We have twice a year meetings, but we get side tracked.
- We started to have a board affiliate, which has been helpful.

Can you think of one idea to improve athletic field maintenance and/or operations (permitting, maintenance, scheduling)?

- Another 50 acres would make a difference.
- Reduce the schedule.
- In the spring you will see four different users using the fields for practice, which beats up the turf. The amount of field use is too much.
- Full-time maintenance staff should be staggered because maintenance is gone at 3:30 pm.
- Would love to see a full-time field specialist.
- We have 21-22 ballfields, ad they are located all over town, which is a challenge to manage.
- We do not have equipment.
- Un-permitted practices exist at various sites.
- Herbicide should be used to control weeds
- We need to have a priority system. Our high-use fields need more attention.
- Monitoring of our core amenities is needed, such as fencing.
- The affiliates need to look at their numbers; they need to have maximums.
- What is the appropriate care and standards for each of those fields and are we following those standards?
- There is vagueness about where the park and field starts and ends, which compounds the problem.
- We need to understand the break point of when to go an alternative surface, which allows us to add capacity.
- We only have two lighted fields, Stevenson and Ridgeland.
- Education and training for affiliates and the public, which needs to be annual, consistent, and some teeth in the training for affiliates.
- We may need to seek another lighted field, though this was suggested for Lindberg and Taylor, so this is going to be a tough challenge. Lights at Lindberg may help with safety.
- The issue with lights is they will be on too late, but we can end at a reasonable time.
- There is now indirect lighting and computer operated systems.

Any suggestions or improving sustainable practices?

- It's a subjective topic; we are approaching sustainable practices.
- We have zero use policy except for infield areas, we are as sustainable as we can be.
- If the weeds are gone, it may help us in other areas.
- If we can just do spot spraying for broadleaf, that would make a big difference.

Does it make more sense to prep fields based on a set schedule or by game times? What prep do you do for District programs?

- We re-chalk, groom, and put the bases out for adult softball. Games have to end at a reasonable time. We don't get complaints from Ridgeland and Stevenson neighbors on late nights.
- There is a mix of who does the diamond fields. Baseball said they will take this on and then they have asked why we are not doing this. They groom Maple, Euclid, and Carroll and maybe Barrie on occasion. The mowing is handled by the contractor. The affiliates said we will take care of it. The volunteers groom the fields. Every season we have training for coaches, but it is poorly attended.

When considering the quality of maintenance of the athletic facilities how would you rank them 1 to 5 (1 is very good, 5 is very poor)? Diamond versus field sports? What improvements or recommendations would you make?

- 4, 3, 4.5 or 3, 3, 3, 3, 3 were the ratings. More time and manpower and prioritizing the heavy use fields are needed. Euclid and Holmes get very heavy use.
- People do not know the school district owns the fields; they are more like a 5.
- As for multi-purpose fields, Lindberg is in pretty good shape. Field is not as good.

When considering the athletic fields, do you feel that there are an adequate number of facilities? Are the locations of the fields convenient? Are they appropriately sized?

- We lack both diamond and multi-purpose fields.
- We could have more teams for upper level soccer and adult softball.
- One member of the group feels we have an adequate number.
- Resting isn't an option.
- We give Longfellow a rest and it looked beautiful, but it is tough keeping people off. Though it ends up not being realistic.
- Everyone thinks that a field is a lined field. You can have multiple practices at Taylor.

Can you identify any field allocation issues?

- The PACT program has made the process much easier as it lays out priorities; though not everyone agrees.
- Permitting process was cut in half.
- Some of the heads of the organization are disconnected from their coaches.
- Ridgeland is a problem because of summer camps, and we can't work on the fields. Though camps do go on a field trip on Thursdays.
- Break in between the end of baseball and the start of soccer: Lindberg and Taylor have soccer camps which we have to work around.
- We are challenged with being able to do maintenance. We beat ourselves to death in short windows of time.
- There is a push and pull between Park District and affiliate programs.
- We communicate with the key people, but we don't communicate schedules with others.
- There are things going right, communication with soccer heads is going well. Field notification is going well, we have streamlined the process and it is much better than what it used to be. Relationship with adult softball and baseball is better.
- The original schedule and letting affiliates know what is available has been going well. Affiliate groups work together to do some trading of the fields, which is good.

What suggestions would you make with regards to amenities, new field locations?

- We have no storage areas.
- Water access.
- Signage.
- Remote maintenance capability in north and south locations for groomers.
- Turf at areas with lights would be the best return on investment.
- Individuals at the upper echelon of affiliates, communication is good, but it doesn't get down to everyone.
- Covered dugouts would be nice.

Do you think the addition of artificial turf would be beneficial and why?

- Land locked system with high level use. We have bad weather to grow grass.
- Making sure we have the economic sustenance to replace worn turf. We delve into sinking fund rather than raise taxes or fees.
- To know you are actually going to play their games means a lot to users. Losing one game to rain has a ripple effect.
- If there were a higher fee structure for this turf that would be good, as well as out of town fees.
- There are maintenance fees to consider.

Any ideas how the District can strengthen partnerships with athletic affiliates?

- Lines of communication: they contact different staff.
- We have a good communication with the organizations.
- The PACT program has been helpful and creates a way to document the process.
- John mentioned that his relationship has never been better.
- Who is the point person from the District?
- Rogue coaches should go through their own organizations and not the District.

Can you think of any questions I have not covered or any additional information you would like to share?

- We try to manage expectations.
- With baseball they had a level of expectation of what the District can do.
- With the facility aspect, we do not have a full-time person dedicated for a quick response. There isn't an appreciation for the demands of our jobs. It is a double edged sword accommodating and then they have that expectation.
- We do not have a mechanism to charge organizations back for anything; we do not have an unlimited list of resources. We do not charge the groups for anything.
- We don't make ourselves a priority, we put others first. We are here to serve everyone.
- Affiliates will change their minds about what they want done or make up their minds at the last minute.

In summary, the general feeling among the staff group responses indicates a need for clearer role definition between the District and the user groups. Furthermore, the group feels there are times the affiliates change field locations on their own; there is a need for an effective rotation schedule and better communication from the groups. The balance between owner of assets (the District) and user of the assets (the affiliates) is out of balance as the user groups seem to make too many decisions about athletic field use. The PACT program was referenced as being beneficial to the relationship.

The staff members are challenged from excess demand for the fields and the resulting wear and tear on the turf. A suggestion would be for each affiliate to have a limit to the number of registrants in their program. There was general support for sports turf fields to help with improving capacity. It was also noted the installation of field turf still creates the need for ongoing maintenance.

In discussing sustainable practices the group desires to be able to minimally apply pesticides in spot treatments to the athletic fields.

As for the group members' assessment of the quality of field maintenance, most of the group gave a score of 3, which is considered a rating of "average" or between very good and very poor.

Maintenance employees are also challenged by a lack of storage, not having their own equipment, having to rely on the quality of work of contractors who do the mowing.

Affiliate/Stakeholder Focus Group Summary

What is your relationship with the District? If an affiliate, what affiliate group do you represent? How would you characterize your relationship with the District?

- Groups represented included: AYSO, OPYBS, Pony Baseball, PDCC, Ascension School, WSSRA, Fenwick High School, Windmills, AYSO, OPRFYF, Huskies Lacrosse, St Giles, School District 97,GAC, Chicago Edge Soccer, and OPRF High School.

Describe the division of labor between your affiliate group and the Park District of Oak Park.

- For baseball we do field preparation; we work with the District pre-season.
  - During season the District has helped with dragging fields. How many times a week is appropriate, I am not sure.
  - We do a clean-up at the beginning of the year.
- There are weed issues.
- AYSO has not always had the same view on issues.
  - Examples are different views on playability
  - Timing of closed fields; sometimes a field is closed in the morning but it may be playable in the afternoon
  - Things are getting better
  - They line fields
  - Provide U8 and U10 goals for games
- For OPRF High School, there is an intergovernmental agreement for shared facilities.
  - Good working relationship that is beneficial to both agencies
  - They provide 50-70% of the maintenance at Lindberg Park on the diamond fields
  - The high school season starts earlier than field preparation is done by the Park District
  - Provides daily maintenance so the games get played
  - For Lacrosse, the frustration is getting fields as they are low in priority as far as field assignments.
  - They have issues with field lighting as they may get a field with lights, but they are not turned on
  - They have an issue of having a permitted park and then other non-permitted users come and use the field. The Park District does not help with controlling this issue

- Youth football is new to the Park District and the relationship is good.
  - Process to acquire fields is frustrating as 2-3 weeks lead time is needed
  - Overall good accommodations
- Chicago Edge feels the field conditions are poor.
  - They are PACT members so they receive good attention and accommodation
  - Has the master calendar sent to her
  - They line fields weekly
  - Help provide (donate) goals
  - Help set-up fields both Spring and Fall
- Others in the group asked to receive the master calendar as well.
- St. Giles experienced frustration at first but have been able to work through difficulties.
  - Field allocation is an issue
  - Many groups mentioned the need for more trash cans for litter, Lindberg Park, in particular.
  - The Carry in/Carry out program was mentioned versus more trash cans

When considering the quality of maintenance of the athletic facilities how would you rank them 1 to 5? (1 is very good and 5 is very poor) What improvements or recommendations would you make?

- One group rated the fields as: 3, 3, 4, 3 but the other group rated the fields as a 4 and 5. Lots of unhappiness of the field conditions. How can we get fewer rainouts? How do we get fields ready after rain or how do we avoid the dustbowl? The District watered the fields, and we would like to see that more.
- The multi-purpose fields were generally rated between a 4 and 5.
- Diamond fields generally scored better, generally a 3.
- Longfellow and Fox are used for WSSRA and are about a 3.
- Football feels their fields would rate a 3 or 4 as they have fewer field quality requirements.
- Lindberg for baseball is a 3 or a 4 for Fenwick.
- AYSO provided photos of a River Forest Park and wondered why Oak Park fields are so bad.
- Kids get hurt when the field is so hard. Soil is very compact throughout the system, particularly at Longfellow. The fields can be dangerous because they are so hard. Many fields are also bumpy.
- Taylor can get beaten up.
- It seems as though less aeration is done on the fields than in the past.
- All would like to see more grass on fields versus weeds on bare areas.
- When there is turf, it is too long.

How would you compare Oak Park's fields to other governmental/Park District/Communities' fields and why?

- It's poor and has something to do with so much demand and not enough fields.
- Less space for fields in Oak Park.
- Expansion is nearly impossible without condemnation of private land.
- A question was asked: what is a reasonable number of games/practices allowed per field per week?

Are there enough fields for weekly practices? Are they an adequate size?

- A resounding no.
- We play and practice at the same fields.
- For AYSO, one third of their participants are not allowed to practice as there are not enough fields for U8 and U10.
- AYSO has enrollment of 1,700 in the Fall and 700 in the spring; 96% are residents and there is no cap on enrollment.
- Chicago Edge has 600 year round enrollment.
- Spring field allocation for soccer is harder in the Spring as field space goes to baseball.

When considering the athletic fields, do you feel that there are an adequate number of facilities? Is the location of the fields convenient? Size?

- Field locations are generally not an issue. The issue is with available parking.
- There are definitely not enough facilities/fields for all the demand for space.
- Concerns with safety at Stevenson Park and homeless people.
- Longfellow and Barrie and Fox for Ascension are pretty close and well positioned.
- SRA feels there are enough fields for their use.
- Locations are no problem, we just need more. There are not enough fields for older boys.
- What happens when Ridgeland and Longfellow are renovated? August for renovation for Longfellow would work best.
- We need extra base length for Longfellow.
- PONY gets second priority to schools.

During wet seasons are there issues rescheduling games?

- Frequently, all have a need to reschedule games.
- For soccer, I wait for an email from Mike. At Barrie, when it is wet, it stays wet forever.
- This spring was hard but we worked it out. We get complaints from parents.
- AYSO and Chicago Edge contact other communities to reschedule games; both frequently reschedule their games to their opponents' fields.

- We schedule 16 games, and we try to get 12 in.
- Mike doesn't have a lot of staff. They don't have enough staff to get everything done.
- Field grading is more important than anything.

What suggestions would you make with regards to amenities, new field locations, field size?

- For new fields, no suggestions in Oak Park; suggestions included the corner of North and Harlem, the old football field at Triton College and Edward Hines lumber yard
- Dugouts should be covered.
- Longfellow and Fox could use netting for foul balls.
- As many batting cages as possible….just netting would be good.
- Identify an area for bleachers…they keep changing location between soccer and baseball. There should be an identified area for bleachers each season.
- Lindberg should have more garbage cans. Move the garbage cans between the fields.
- We have the same issue at PONY. There is overflow of garbage.
- The District uses the fields before we get there and there is a lot of trash there before we get there.
- Lindberg has a great irrigation system but the heads sticks out.
- At Lindberg there will be two high school teams on the field the same time. This will be a problem with size.
- We need a couple more fields with 85 foot arc.
- Euclid and Longfellow could extend base paths.

Do you think the addition of synthetic turf would be beneficial and why? Where and what size?

- We play at Forest Park and would love it in Oak Park.
- Ridgeland Common would be a good location, as lights are already there.
- Stevenson would be a good location.
- Taylor, Barrie or Lindberg.
- We are neutral about it with baseball. The infield turf should be real turf.
- Do have to clean the fields after rain.
- Maintenance wise the community didn't want synthetic.
- You have to pick the right spot.
- Can a high school size 400 meter track be incorporated into an artificial turf field?
- Keep the pathways and sidewalks away from multi-purpose fields.
- Start installing turf fields with existing lights.

Any suggestions as to how the District can better utilize/schedule fields?

- Provide master scheduling calendar for everyone, not just PACT members.
- Provide an earlier or open period for non-affiliate groups.
- Develop a process to help new groups with field space; the current system makes it difficult for new groups to get space.
- Put limits on the size of programs to allow for new groups.
- Don't allocate everything for PACT groups; hold some fields for others.
- Use the master scheduling more efficiently.
- We try to be flexible for PONY.
- We bounce back and forth for baseball.
- Artificial lights and more fields to expand the times available, games could then start earlier in the year.
- The PACT program has been helpful.

Any suggestions for improvement in the scheduling and permitting processes?

- Yes, this works ok.
- You can go online and see the schedule.
- We may be permitted but we may not use the field.
- PONY tries to be flexible with other groups using the field the same field and use the corner, which is a problem because a lack of practice space.
- We only have two fields and it's tough.

Any ideas about how the Park District can strengthen its sustainable practices?

- We do not know what their practices are.
- It would be possible to use more environmentally friendly practices.
- Weeds are a big problem.
- Provide more recycling containers.
- Expand Carry In/Carry Out program.
- Find a safe way to manage weeds.
- Expand water management on turf.
- Explore environmental impact of turf fields.
  - Stormwater management
  - Off grassing of turf/rubber infolled fields for users that are under 36 inches
- When they aerate Lindberg there are cores all over the field.

Any ideas how the District can strengthen or build new partnerships?

- The pay to play was a shock.
- Comfortable with the PACT program.
- Provide an indoor domed facility.
- Think out of the box for additional space, such as on top of High School parking garage or other two story buildings to add a third level for athletics.
- They do communicate well. It was better this year. More emails about field conditions have been good. Mike sends an email at 2 pm. The hot line is never updated.
- There is usually an attitude of we have tried this and it doesn't work.
- The Park District doesn't treat us as a customer. They like to be in charge of us and not a partner.
- We would like a more long term schedule of a partnership rather than year to year.
- We have contributed money for tennis courts and it doesn't seem to be taken into account.
- Filling out the PACT agreement is onerous doing it every year. Now there is a fee to apply for PACT. Why do we have to complete this every year.

Can you think of any questions I have not covered or any additional information you would like to share?

- Every year the PACT agreement changes. We make accommodations….we need long term need requests.
- We had serious overcharges. $6/head… after 800 hours, there is a rental fee.
- Who is the direct contact? Bobbi seems to be the one person to deal with.
- From PONY we don't have anything to contribute aside from manpower, we want to help… shouldn't those things count?
- Line the soccer fields more often.
- Provide an outdoor sheet of ice at Ridgeland Common.
- Sites with restrooms are typically locked on weekends. Ridgeland Common and Maple Park have disgusting bathrooms that are not cleaned.
- Restrooms should be available at all parks with athletic fields.
- WSSRA would like to have the fields lined: Fox, Longfellow and Field.
- Demand isn't going to go away and the fields need to support that. We should be able to fulfill the community demand.
- Bobbi has been a great liaison.

In summary, there are opportunities for improvement. Though, most focus group members feel the communication efforts and permitting processes have generally gone well and improve from year to year. There are a few groups that feel as though the District should treat them more as customers. The group members recognize the challenge facing the District with increased

demand for athletic fields. There is general satisfaction with the permitting process. However, the permitting process should include criteria to ensure the ability of the Park District to grow their own programs for the good of the entire community. Criteria can include the establishment of caps on league play and maximums on affiliate registrations.

It appears the division of responsibilities needs to be more clearly defined; however, some of the communication issues exist within the affiliate groups, from organization leaders to coaches. There is constant turnover among the groups, which makes the communication process more difficult.

From the user perspective, field maintenance is a concern, particularly from soccer. The group members rated multi-purpose fields as poor or average. Most significant issues are lack of good turf coverage and the presence of weeds. Diamond field users had a more favorable impression of the quality of maintenance of diamond fields. When comparing Oak Park fields to other fields in the area, the focus group members feel the quality of maintenance is better in other communities.

The groups support the notion of the District investing in sports turf, mostly for multi-purpose fields. This isn't a high priority for the baseball groups.

The groups did not know much about the District's sustainable practices, so there is an opportunity to provide more education to the groups. The user groups can become advocates of the District's practices. In addition, the maintenance practice section of this Assessment can also serve as a vehicle to educating groups.

General Maintenance Practices

The following section details maintenance practices for consideration by the Park District of Oak Park. This section details the following information:

- Maintenance Standards
- Comparison of Best Practices to Current Park District of Oak Park Practices
- Detail of Maintenance Practices from other Agencies
- Integrated Pest Management Practices

For nearly two years the Park District has been using the services of James A. Fizzell & Associates, LTD. for soil analysis, sod specification, developing Turfgrass Management Calendars and Reports of Site Inspections for Field Park, Barrie Park, Taylor Park, Lindberg Park, and Ridgeland Common Park. The turf cultural practices (mowing, watering, fertilizing, cultivation and repair, seeding and sodding, and pest control) is very comprehensive and, though there is not a Turfgrass Management Plan outlined for each park, this information can be used as a turf guide at all of the Park District's athletic facilities. The key for success is implementing the recommended guidelines at the correct time. The two key tasks in overused fields are aerating and seeding as often as possible.

Knowing that pulling cores during the playing season is an inconvenience to the user, an aera-vator with a seed box by First Products is recommended. This tractor attachment can combine the tasks of aerating and seeding into one which saves on time and labor dollars. This attachment does not pull cores as conventional aerating, but instead uses a tine that penetrates into the soil and the vibration action shatters the soil structure helping to relieve compaction. Since cores are not pulled, you can aera-vate and seed weekly in the high traffic and compacted areas between mid-April to mid-June and then again early September to late October. Conventional core aerating should still be performed in early spring, (March into early April), between seasons when weather conditions are favorable or an irrigation system or other means of watering is available (mid-June to the end of June and mid-August until early September) and in late fall, late October to early December).

Grass seed can also be broadcast spread from a spreader in goal areas and the center circle of multi-purpose fields weekly to allow the athletes and their foot traffic to work the seed into the soil. Seeding of goal areas is currently being attempted at Taylor Park which has a sprinkler system to keep the soil moist. Using a product such as Penn-Mulch Seed Accelerator will improve the seeding success rate by providing water to the seed for a longer period of time. This is even more critical in years like this past summer when we experienced numerous 90 degree days with little precipitation.

The use of turf blankets in the goal and center circle areas can both extend the growing season in fall and provide an earlier growing median in spring. This is accomplished by keeping the soil temperature 10-15 degrees warmer later into the fall allowing for an earlier warm-up in spring. With fields that have a high use, potentially gaining two additional weeks in the fall and a similar time period in the spring provides the Grounds Manager an opportunity to have grass seed germinate in what would otherwise be an unfavorable time period. Turf blankets can also be used to cover newly laid sod. With the warmer temperatures the blankets provide, the sod's root system continues to grow and becomes established.

A key to any living plant is the availability of water. If it is available at the athletic field site, it needs to be working efficiently. Irrigation systems or quick connects were noted at seven parks (Field, Ridgeland Common, Taylor, Lindberg, Barrie, Scoville and Mills). At each location there were either entire zones not working or separate irrigation heads that were not turning. Where the irrigation was working the turf was recovering from the spring athletic season, summer heat, and drought stresses. Park sites with quick connects should be used with traveling sprinklers to assist with turf restoration. Managing this number of irrigation systems requires available labor; outsourcing the management and repair of the irrigations systems should be considered.

Infield maintenance is conducted in conjunction with athletic affiliates. Infield deficiencies consist of:

- infrequent dragging
- accumulation of diamond field mix along the fence lines
- diamond field mix allowed to remain in the sideline concrete gutters
- diamond field mix allowed to build up at the transition zone with the turf outfield to create a "lip"

- inadequate amount of diamond field mix creating low areas that hold water during wet periods
- flat infields verses a properly crowned infield that aids in draining
- batter box and pitching mound areas with depressions from the athlete "digging in"
- weeds in the infield and along the sideline and backstop fencing
- trees growing into sideline fencing
- backstop and sideline fence rails are missing
- fence fabric ties are missing and could be addressed when staff is on site

The level of maintenance is at a very basic level consisting of dragging the infields during the seasons but is not continued in the off season to control weeds and wash outs.

A schedule should be developed to have three Park District infields laser graded yearly, more if funds are available. This would consist of the diamond field mix being removed from the backstops and sideline fence, additional diamond field mix added to restore the proper crown and pitch, and the installation of mound and home plate bricks such as Diamond Pro®Mound / Home Plate Clay bricks to reduce the depressions in front of the pitching rubber and on the sides of home plate. This will reduce maintenance time of needing to fill these depressions multiple times weekly and provides a safer surface for sliding.

Maintenance Standards Descriptions

The recommended maintenance standards are divided among three levels and two categories in each level. These categories are for ball diamonds (baseball and softball) and rectangular multi-purpose fields (soccer, football, lacrosse, etc.).

Level 1 is for the premier fields that represent showcase athletic fields that typically have the highest level of completion played on the field. These fields will receive the highest degree of maintenance the Park District and its Affiliates can afford.

Level 2 will consist of the majority of athletic fields; they are normally used for in-house programs or younger age travel leagues. The maintenance practices are similar but will have a decreased number of tasks, along with a decrease in materials used per field.

Level 3 will consist of the school sites. Maintenance on these fields will depend on coordination with the School District and any agreed upon arrangements.

Level 1 – Maintenance Standards

Athletic Fields Grounds Maintenance (baseball and softball)

- High Profile Game Fields
- Mowing will occur 2 times per week

- Mowing heights
  - 2" during cool season
  - 2 ½ "during warm season
- Edging of all field perimeters will occur twice monthly
- 95% turf coverage at the start of every season
- 90% turf coverage after play begins
- 5% weed infestation
- 0% bare area at the start of every season
- 4% bare area will be acceptable after play begins
- Apply seed to heavily worn areas weekly
- Remove or disperse grass clippings if visible
- Aerate twice annually
- Spot aerate high use areas twice per month
- Inspect thatch layer regularly and remove as needed
- Test soil annually
- Additional testing will occur if deemed necessary
- Fertilize turf up to 6 pounds of nitrogen per 1000 sq. ft. per year
- Soil moisture will be consistent:
  - No wet areas
  - No dry areas
  - Firm enough for foot and mower traffic
  - Hand water as needed
  - Adjust or repair the irrigation system weekly
- Inspect daily for insects, disease, and stress
  - Respond to outbreaks within 24 hours
- Re-work infield at the conclusion of individual seasons
- Prep fields per requests and agreements
- Prep fields once weekly to keep infields weed free when not in use
- Repair mounds and worn areas during field prep
- Paint foul lines weekly
- Remove trash daily
- Inspect and change lighting on a regularly scheduled maintenance program (where applicable)

Athletic fields grounds maintenance (rectangular)

- Mowing will occur twice weekly
- Mowing heights
  - 2" during cool season
  - 2 ½ "during warm season

- 95% turf coverage at the start of every season
- 80% turf coverage after play begins
- 5% weed infestation
- 0% bare area at the start of every season
- 15% bare and weak areas will be acceptable after play begins
- Apply seed to heavily worn areas after every weekend period of games
- Remove or disperse grass clippings if visible
- Aerate 3 times annually
- Spot aerate high use areas twice monthly (minimum)
- Inspect thatch layer regularly and remove as needed
- Test soil annually
- Additional testing will occur if deemed necessary
- Soil moisture will be consistent
  - No wet areas
  - No dry areas
  - Firm enough for foot and mower traffic
- Inspect daily for insects, disease, and stress
  - Respond to outbreaks within 24 hours
- Paint lines on field weekly
- Inspect goals and nets; replace nets as needed
- Inspect and change lighting on a regularly scheduled maintenance program

Level 2 – Maintenance Standards

Athletic Field Grounds Maintenance (baseball and softball)

- Mowing will occur once weekly
- Mowing heights (non-irrigated fields)
  - 2 ½" during cool season
  - 3" during warm season
- Edging of all field perimeters will occur once monthly
- 80% turf coverage at the start of every season

- 75% turf coverage after play begins
- 20% weed infestation
- 0% bare area at the start of every season
- 5% bare area will be acceptable after play begins
- Remove or disperse grass clippings if visible
- Aerate twice annually
- Spot aerate high use areas monthly
- Test soil annually
  - Additional testing will occur if deemed necessary
- Fertilize turf up to 4 pounds of nitrogen per 1000 sq. ft. per year
- Soil moisture will be consistent
  - No wet areas
  - No dry areas
  - Firm enough for foot and mower traffic
  - Adjust or repair irrigation system weekly
- Inspect daily for insects, disease, and stress
  - Respond to outbreaks within 24 hours
- Re-work infield at the conclusion of individual seasons
- Prep fields per requests and agreements with Recreation Department and participating groups
- Prep fields once weekly to keep infields weed free when not in use
- Repair mounds and worn areas during field prep
- Paint foul lines weekly
- Remove trash daily
- Inspect and change lighting on a regularly scheduled maintenance program

Athletic Field Grounds Maintenance (rectangular)

- Mowing will occur once weekly
- Mowing heights (non-irrigated fields)
  - 2 ½“during cool season
  - 3” during warm season
- 80% turf coverage at the start of every season
- 65% turf coverage after play begins
- 20% weed infestation
- 5% bare area at the start of every season
- 15% bare and weak areas will be acceptable after play begins

- Apply seed to heavily worn areas after every weekend period of games
- Remove or disperse grass clippings if visible
- Aerate twice annually
- Spot aerate high use areas monthly (minimum)
- Test soil annually
- Additional testing will occur if deemed necessary
- Soil moisture will be consistent
  - No wet areas
  - No dry areas
  - Firm enough for foot and mower traffic
  - Adjust or repair irrigation system weekly
- Inspect daily for insects, disease, and stress,
  - Respond to outbreaks within 24 hours
- Paint lines on field weekly
- Inspect goals and nets; replace nets as needed
- Remove trash daily
- Inspect and change lighting on a regularly scheduled maintenance program

Level 3 – Maintenance Standards

Athletic Fields (baseball and softball)

- Mowing will occur once weekly
- Mowing heights
  - 2 ½" during cool season
  - 3"during warm season
- Edging of all field perimeters will occur at the end of the season
- 65% turf coverage at the start of every season and after play begins
- 35% weed infestation
- 10% bare area at the start of every season
- 15% bare area will be acceptable after play begins
- Aerate once annually
- Spot aerate high use areas as needed
- Re-work infield at the conclusion of individual seasons
- Prep fields per requests and agreements with Recreation Department and participating groups
- Keep infields weed free when not in use
- Repair worn areas during field prep
- Paint foul lines weekly
- Remove trash daily

Athletic Field Grounds Maintenance (rectangular)

- Mowing will occur twice weekly
- Mowing heights
  - 2 ½"during cool season
  - 3" during warm season
- Edging of all field perimeters will occur once monthly
- 70% turf coverage at the start of every season
- 65% turf coverage after play begins
- 30% weed infestation
- 10% bare area at the start of every season
- 15% bare and weak areas will be acceptable after play begins
- Apply seed to heavily worn areas monthly
- Aerate twice annually
- Spot aerate high use areas as needed
- Repair goals at the end of the season

Integrated Pest Management Practices

In addition to the maintenance standards outlined above, the District should use an Integrated Pest Management Program (IPM) to control pests. The goals of the IPM program are to manage pest issues on District owned properties and maintain these properties to the highest quality possible, while also providing a safe and healthy environment for community members and protecting the environment. Currently, the Park District uses Glyphosate in specific areas and not in proximity to playcenters or on the grass of athletic fields.

IPM is an effective approach to help the District achieve and balance these goals. Prevention of pest problems is the basis of a sound IPM program. This requires knowledge of the environment and the pest and its life cycle so that steps can be taken to disrupt food, shelter or habitat to keep the pest below an acceptable threshold. As an example, taking steps to grow healthy turf by proper irrigation and mowing height, grass variety selection, aeration and fertilization can crowd out pest weeds and establish an environment favorable to grass and less favorable to weeds. This reduces or eliminates the need for pesticides, but also produces healthy, beautiful turf that is sustainable and requires few inputs, including lower water requirements.

IPM relies on a combination of knowledge and common sense. The earlier a pest problem is identified and preventive steps are taken, the less likely it is to become a serious issue at a later time and the more potential there is for long-term cost saving.

The Environmental Protection Agency defines pesticides as "any substance or mixture of substances intended for preventing, destroying, repelling, or mitigating any pest. Pests can be insects, mice and other animals, unwanted plants (weeds), fungi, or microorganisms like bacteria and viruses. Though often misunderstood to refer only to insecticides, the term pesticide also applies to herbicides, fungicides, and various other substances used to control pests."

Steps in the IPM process

The Park District of Oak Park should follow a step-wise progression for treating pest issues, with the use of pesticides, both synthetic and natural products, being a last resort. The pest is first assessed. For example, noxious weeds on natural lands are mapped and the location and density is recorded. Next, a threshold is established. For many pests, tolerance for pests can be fairly high. In most cases, thresholds are set based on maintenance priorities for specific sites.

Broadleaf weeds, such as dandelions, are tolerated at higher levels in general-use park grass than on athletic fields, for example. If the threshold is exceeded and treatment of the pest is necessary, the District's IPM practices direct staff to follow this hierarchy of actions for addressing pest issues:

- Prevention is the first and most important step in the IPM program. Prevention can occur at either the design or management stage. An example of prevention is using seed-free mulch or soil to prevent weeds from invading.
- Cultural control is a broad set of management techniques that manipulate the environment to make it less favorable to pests. Examples of cultural control include vegetation management such as mulching, aeration and pruning, or sanitation to clean or remove a source of pest infestation.
- Mechanical control is the physical control of pest populations. This can be done by hand or with equipment. Examples include hand-pulling weeds or removing insects or insect eggs by hand.
- Biological control utilizes natural enemies to control pests through either an introduction of natural enemies or providing harborage for natural enemies. Examples of biological control include release of ladybird beetles for control of aphids or the use of wasps in sewer tunnels that parasitize cockroach egg cases.
- Chemical control of pests is the last resort used by the District when all other methods have failed or are cost prohibitive. When chemicals are applied, products may only be used if they are on a District prescreened Approved Pesticide List. The method and timing of any treatment must give consideration to protecting human health, non-target organisms, water quality and the environment.

Plant Protectants

The following information can be used to inform Oak Park residents about the use of plant protectants. The Arlington Heights Park District provides this information to their residents.

"In our continuing efforts to provide quality athletic fields for our residents, the Park District of Oak Park has begun implementing its annual spring/fall broadleaf weed control program. The Parks Department will be posting various park athletic field locations for treatment of broadleaf weeds.

According to our Integrated Pest Management Plan (IPM) these athletic field sites have been selected based on continuing inspections of weed populations. Once an athletic field site has exceeded the designated weed population threshold, it will be scheduled for treatment. All Park District staff involved in the application process has completed training by the Illinois Department of Agriculture and is licensed by the state. Athletic field sites will be posted at established entrances 24 hours prior to treatment and may remain posted for 3-4 days. This allows for various weather conditions which may not be favorable for treatment to begin or be completed. After treatment, athletic field site areas are again posted; informing residents of the date, time, and products used. They will remain posted for 24 hours after treatment. Treated areas can be accessed when turf grass has dried.

The Park District will make every effort to avoid treating several athletic field sites within the same neighborhood. Please refer to this Web page often to stay informed as to which park sites are scheduled for treatment. The Park District appreciates your patience during these operations."

Field Rotation Recommendations

As part of the athletic field maintenance program the ability to rotate fields and provide mid-season field adjustments to negate wear are all necessary to achieve the District's goal of improved field playability. The implementation of these recommendations will include consultation and education with affiliate partners. The following information outlines the list of recommendations for field rotations.

Game and/or practice field rotation and guidelines

- Coaches should be instructed/trained to use unlined grass spaces and hold practices perpendicular to the game field layout at all locations. This will lessen the wear on the goal areas.
- Affiliates should be included in field maintenance, care, preservation discussions and plans.
- Goals should be removed during the week to allow for protection of turf in soccer goal areas.
- Coaches should be instructed to use unlined green space next to the field if available. Examples of these spaces are at the north end of Barrie Park near Garfield Street and at the north end of Carroll Park near Harvard Street.
- Field Rotations

Park Location	*Rotation*
Carroll Park	Rotate the field 90 degrees from spring to fall
Field Park	A smaller field at a 90 degree angle from the large field layout
Fox Park	A small 90'x150' field angled SW to NW
Lindberg Park	There are numerous combinations with rotating 45 or 90 degrees
Longfellow Park	Rotate the field 90 degrees or 45 degrees from SE to NW

Mid-season field adjustments

- A mid-season re-alignment can lessen the wear in the high traffic goal and center-circle areas of the field. It also allows for these areas to begin the restoration process of aeration, seeding and sodding. The adjustments represent the size of fields each park location can accommodate.

Park Location	*Available Field Size*	*Scheduled Field Size*	*Field Adjustment*
Andersen	90 x 150	75 x 120	30'
Barrie	180 x 300	135 x 210	90'
Euclid Square	90 x 150	90 x 150	36'
Lindberg (Upper)	120 x 200	120 x 180	20'
Lindberg (S)	180 x 320	180 x 300	20'
Longfellow	150 x 225	135 x 180	40'
Maple (N)	90 x 150	75 x 120	30'
Maple (S)	90 x 150	75 x 120	30'
Taylor	210 x 310	180 x 300	10'

Field usage with the addition of a dedicated turf multi-purpose field

With the addition of a dedicated full size (180' x 300') artificial turf field provides several opportunities for staff to lessen the number of practices held on other large fields in the District.

- With the use of portable lights, turf field use could be extended on average two and one half hours longer each day (Monday thru Friday) or the equivalent of 12.5 hours per week, 125 hours per season.
- It would allow an existing large field such as Barrie Park, Field Park, or Taylor Park to have the large field layout to be made into two smaller 90' x 150' fields. This would allow all the fields this size to lessen the number of practices or it would allow for a site to be rested for an entire growing season.

A measurement for success of the athletic field maintenance program and field rotation will be to see a reduction in the number of yards of sod that is replaced compared to previous years. In 2012 the number of yards replaced is estimated to be 12,700 square yards. In 2011, the actual amount was slightly over 17,000 yards. An additional measurement for success is improving the system-wide average of a score of "3," which represents a satisfactory rating.

Comparison of Best Practices to Current Practices

Oak Park staff completed a thorough listing of current maintenance practices and scheduled frequency of tasks. The consulting team was charged with reviewing the list of tasks and determining if any gaps exist between current practices and best practices. Upon review, it appears the Turf Management Plan developed by Jim Fizzell, relating to fertilization, top dressing, and renovation is being implemented. There are four suggested practices that are identified to be implemented in 2013 that have not been accounted for from the information provided. The tasks outlined consider the maximum number of hours to perform the task. In doing ongoing review and assessment, the actual number of hour may be less if field conditions do not warrant a task, such as weekly infield dragging.

1. The first recommendation includes weekly infield dragging during the off-season to reduce low spots, weeds and to maintain a safe surface. There are twenty diamond field sites (13 parks and 7 schools) to be maintained for fourteen weeks between August and mid-November. On average, this task includes an allocation of one hour per field for a total of 280 labor hours.
2. The second additional task is the broadcast seeding of an athletic field variety of grass seed in each of the goal areas each week of the spring and fall season. This amounts to 800 pounds of grass seed each season, or a total of 1600 pounds for the year at a cost of $1.77 per pound or $2,836 for the year. The time required to perform this task is approximately 45 minutes per field per week or 375 labor hours annually.
3. The third practice is the use of turf blankets starting at two locations, the site of two large fields, Barrie and Taylor. At a minimum, turf blankets should be installed on the goal areas, and if budgets allow, the installation of a turf blanket at center field. Installation, early spring roll-back and mowing, and the final removal per field is a minimum of 25.5 man-hours or a total 51 labor hours annually. The cost of each blanket is approximately $1,200 or $7,200 for three blankets for the two locations.

4. The final practice is the mid-season field re-alignments to those fields that have space available to move the field. When this is performed the old lines will need to be concealed with green spray paint to avoid player confusion between the various lines. Paint supplies would be $63.00 per field with up to nine fields adjusted each season for a $567.00 per season or $1134.00 annually. The time required to repaint these fields and to re-set the goals total 48 labor hours per season and 96 labor hours annually.

These practices result in approximately $11,170 in materials and supplies and 802 additional labor hours. According to Oak Park staff, the average hourly salary and benefits for full-time staff is $31.05. Seasonal staff hourly rate is $9.95. Assuming 80% of the work is completed by full-time staff, the total labor hour costs for these tasks is $19,922 for full-time staff labor hours and $1,565 for seasonal staff.

Materials and Supplies:	$11,170
Labor Hour Cost:	$21,487
Total:	**$32,657**

Comparative Maintenance Practices from Selected Agencies

Park District of Oak Park

- Population: 50,824
- Total Operating Budget: $11 M
- % of Operating Budget Dedicated to Athletic Field Maintenance: 1.4% ($286,584)
- Labor Only: $126,546
- Staff Allotment: 6.5 Full-time / 1.5 FTE Seasonal Staff (approximately 3,000 hours)
- Total Athletic Field Acreage: 19.9 (1 acre per 2,553 people)
  - Total Diamond Fields = 14 (1 field per 3630 people)
  - Total Multi-Purpose Fields = 12 (1 field per 4,235 people)
- Usage: The majority of users for the PDOP athletic fields are affiliates who are part of the PACT program. PDOP staff is responsible for the pre-season preparation of these fields, capital improvement projects, scheduling, and basic upkeep throughout the season. Turf management of the athletic fields is a contracted service at $114,980. Turf management includes cutting, fertilizing, sod replacement, mulching, bedding, edging and pruning. This expense also is part of the PDOP operating budget. This is a rare practice as virtually all park systems mow their own fields.
- Rental/Cost Recovery: Athletic fields can be rented for $46/hour. There is an additional $26 for the use of lighted fields. Affiliates receive a discount on these fees depending on their categorization as part of the PACT program. Affiliates are allocated a set amount (cap) of hours and charged a participation fee ($5 or $6) per player per season and an hourly discounted use fee for any hours used over their threshold allocation.

*Other agencies included do not use school district fields as Oak Park does

Park District of River Forest

- Population: 11,200
- Total Operating Budget: $2.1 M
- % of Operating Budget Dedicated to Athletic Field Maintenance: Field expenses are not broken out in the budget detail.
- Staff Allotment: Staffing is not specified per job duty.
- Total Athletic Field Acreage: 30 (1 acre per 373 people)
  - Total Diamond Fields = 10 (1 field per 1120 people)
  - Total Multi-Purpose Fields = 9 (1 field per 1244 people)
- Usage: The main user of the PDRF athletic fields are affiliate groups. These groups do all have a written policy/agreement with the park district. All mowing of the athletic fields is done by the park district as well as all of the coordination of schedules. There is a procedure in place to rest 1 to 2 fields every season.
- Rentals/Cost Recovery: Both diamond and multi-purpose fields are available to rent. These rental rates vary from $5 to $25 per hour. In the case of affiliate usage, groups are charged $5/person/sport.

Blue Valley Recreation Department

- Population: 135,000
- Total Operating Budget: $10.4 M
- % of Operating Budget Dedicated to Athletic Field Maintenance: 7% ($771,530)
- Staff Allotment: 10 Full-time / 10 Part-time
- Total Athletic Field Acreage: 138 (1 acre per 978 people)
  - Total Diamond Fields = 46 (1 field per 2935 people)
  - Total Multi-Purpose Fields (open space/practice) = 0
- Usage: The BVRC runs all athletic programming "in-house." As a result, all of the maintenance is also done by BVRC staff. Other potential user groups include tournament providers and smaller independent groups.
- Rentals/Cost Recovery: Due to the priority of scheduling going towards the BVRC programs, there is little space to rent each season. As a result, rental revenue is not a necessary revenue source to help maintain the fields. This minimal supply of space also allows for the BVRC to charge a premium for space from between $132 to $142 per field.

St. Charles Park District

- Population: 49,000
- Total Operating Budget: $15.4 M
- % of Operating Budget Dedicated to Athletic Field Maintenance: 2% ($358,700)
- Staff Allotment: 6 Full-time / 7 Part-time
- Total Athletic Field Acreage: 1500 (1 acre per 32 people)
  - Total Diamond Fields = 25 (1 field per 1960 people)
  - Total Multi-Purpose Fields (football/lacrosse/soccer) = 38 (1 field per 1289 people)

- Usage: Fields are used by both "in-house" affiliate groups, non-affiliate resident groups, and outside renters. Priority is given to in-house affiliates for scheduling. In return, these groups prepare fields for games (lining, filling wholes, etc.) as well as help provide funding for capital projects related to athletic fields.
- Rental/Cost Recovery: All affiliate groups are billed directly for their field usage. Field rentals for non-affiliate groups range from $21/hour to $200 for a full day.

The Park District of Oak Park has the lowest percentage of operating budget dedicated to field maintenance compared to the other recreation agencies. The most similar park district to the PDOP in terms of population, budget, and field budget is the St. Charles Park District. However, the St. Charles Park District schedules 1,500 acres of athletic fields versus 19.9 acres in Oak Park. Even with the 1,500 acres, the St. Charles Park District only dedicates 2% of its operating budget towards field maintenance. This is accomplished through written agreements with the affiliate groups to do the majority of field work through their particular season. In addition, these groups help provide funding for any capital improvements on the fields they use.

PDOP field rental costs are high compared to two of the three recreation departments. This is most likely due to the low per capita of fields available. However due to the minimal inventory, the rental fee may be set too low. According to the PACT pricing, a PDOP affiliate baseball team with 10-12 players on the roster pays a total of $50-$60 for their use of a diamond field for the entire season. For example, a 10 week season with two teams on each field comes to $10 to $12 per a 1 hour game or 21% to 26% the going rate of $46 per hour.

The National Parks and Recreation 2012 National Database report shows a median jurisdiction population (50,000-100,000) per facility of a multi-purpose field of 1 field per 3,523 and one diamond field per 3,139 population. Although the PDOP falls near the national average at 1 field per 3,630 people, when compared to the other local agencies it is well below the fields per capita compared to the population and variety of sports in need of space.

Of the agencies researched, only the St. Charles Park District owns a syntheric turf field. This is a diamond field which was funded by and is also maintained by the baseball association. Both the PDOP and Park District of River Forest schedule field use on synthetic fields owned by other entities. The PDRF uses fields at Dominican and Concordia University through partnership agreements.

Due to the lack of field space, the quality of the fields should be the main concern. The better the fields, the more can be done within their acreage. In order to accomplish consistent quality in athletic fields, the proper funds need to be allocated to maintain them. The PDOP will need to determine a true value for field space. If this value is seen to be higher than the going rate of $46, then the costs associated to affiliate groups will need to increase as well. This may have to happen anyway as these groups are paying less than 30% of the going rate. The Blue Valley Recreation Department does the majority of programming in-house. So they have decided to dedicate 7% of their operating budget to field maintenance. Also with their programming, available space for outside groups is limited. As a result, due to the supply and demand, their rates are extremely high at $132 per hour. The St. Charles Park District provides a higher scheduling priority to those affiliate groups that provide funds to help pay for capital projects.

Capacity and Demand Data and Analysis

Sports fields were evaluated based on their capacity to support the demand by the various users. Utilizing the Capacity-Demand Standards Model, capacity of the current facilities based on industry management practices by field type was calculated and compared to scheduled usage in 2012 based on the District's calendars. Users and hours of use were documented by day and summarized by hours per week of use.

Accuracy of both capacity and demand is dependent upon the accuracy and availability of detailed inventory of assets; basically, good base data produces good output data, and vice versa. Detailed user data by asset was provided by the District and utilized for the basis of the analysis.

Capacity

Capacity of an asset is defined as the maximum number of hours that an individual asset can serve and remain in a good servable condition. To determine the capacity of each asset, usage factors and guidelines for optimal turf management practices by field type (e.g. engineered, non-engineered, synthetic, etc.) are determined based on industry accepted practices and PROS professional experience and operational knowledge. The following factors are used to determine capacity:

- Asset information
- Type of asset/field
- Field construction and amenities – engineered and irrigated
- Usage/user data – generally accepted potential usages that occur on the asset

Capacity of current assets is based on usage factors per individual asset type (multi-purpose fields and diamond fields). Due to the possibility of multiple programming options at one field (e.g. football, soccer, etc.) standards for all event types for assets with the same classifications are applied to calculate the average anticipated hours of use. PROS recognizes that it is possible for an infinite number of events/activities to occur at any one asset; however, to model a dynamic condition with a static model, standards were applied to each asset, based on the potential for normally accepted usages to occur at a specific asset.

Therefore, capacity of multi-purpose fields and diamond fields were based on the scheduled hours of use. Capacity for diamond fields was based on PROS recommended hours of use.

Facility Usage Guidelines

Facility Usage Guidelines recognize the impact of events on a playing surface and address the importance of rest in order to limit serious degradation to the surface and maintain the life of the asset. Regarding natural turf, as usage (seasons) progresses, conditions begin to deteriorate. Continued abuse limits, if not completely inhibits, the recovery period required to provide a quality surface. Increased exposure to the elements has the ability to transform a natural turf

surface into a hard, non-forgiving base. Increased exposure to the elements combined with high impact use has the ability to transform a natural turf surface into a sub-par surface at best, and quite possibly a safety hazard. Usage guidelines are based on industry accepted management practices by field characteristics and are integral to the quality and integrity of the playing surface.

Due to the differing levels of intensities normally associated with diamond field versus multi-purpose field assets, two different usage guidelines are used for natural turf fields. Diamond sports asset events (baseball and softball) have the most intense usage on the dirt/limestone/other non-turf infield surfaces, and minimum intensity usage on the turf surfaces. On the other hand, multi-purpose asset events (soccer, football, lacrosse, etc.) experience high intensity usage on concentrated areas of the turf surface for short periods of time before continuing on to another area of the field. These two varying usages are the basis for two facility usage guidelines – one for diamond assets that allows for a greater number of weekly events to take place and one for multi-purpose assets that allows a lesser number of weekly events to take place. Asset surface characteristics include three types – Synthetic, Engineered and Non- Engineered:

Synthetic – manufactured/artificial surface which is designed to mimic natural grass in appearance, feel, energy absorption and slide characteristics. This surface allows for year round activity and is not affected by elements such as rain, which makes natural surfaces less or non-usable.

- Synthetic surfaces are the only asset surface type that benefits from lighting; this is due to the artificial surface not requiring rest to regenerate and lighting allows for programming at all times of the day
- Synthetic surfaces will experience a shortened asset lifecycle with increased usage (i.e. typical lifecycle under normal usage conditions is 8 to 12 years)
- It is recommended that synthetic surfaces are irrigated to help alleviate heat and assist in field cleanliness
- In extremely hot weather irrigation will not relieve heat

Engineered – a natural grass surface that has been properly designed and engineered with extensive site work; field construction includes proper soil/fill, grading, and drainage profile to support a pre-determined sport/field type. This type of surface is commonly used at colleges and professional sports facilities. Engineered surfaces typically include a sand base and require significant amounts of labor to keep in top condition.

- Lighting on an engineered asset only contributes to the convenience of use; Facility Usage Guidelines should be followed to allow for adequate rest
- Irrigation allows for regeneration of the natural turf surface

Non-Engineered – a natural grass surface which is created in an open space area such as a park or school. The surface is the least costly to install and maintain, but it does not hold up well with extensive levels of play due to the drainage, grading, and soil limitations.

- Lighting on a non-engineered asset only contributes to the convenience of use; Facility Usage Guidelines should be followed to allow for adequate rest
- Irrigation, rest between uses, and periodic turf care/replacement are necessary for regeneration of the natural turf surface

PROS recognizes that in some instances such as tournament play certain assets may be utilized more than the suggested Facility Usage Guidelines; this does not however necessitate the adjustment of the usage guidelines. It is important to comprehend that the capacity of an asset – the suggested usage – is completely independent of the demand – actual usage. Guidelines consider the amount of usage a field can support and the corresponding rest (i.e., non-used time for turf recovery) that is required based on the field characteristics (e.g., engineered vs. non-engineered, irrigated vs. non-irrigated).

These guidelines are based on PROS experience with similar sports fields including the level of demand for athletic fields compared to the realistic availability of the District's assets in meeting the demands with the current inventory of assets. Weather conditions also play a role in usage guidelines. This would imply that in normal conditions the area should not experience a prolonged period of freezing temperatures. According to Childs Play Organic Lawns, temperature dictates whether the grass will photosynthesize (make and store energy) or respirate (burn stored energy). Cool season grasses, like Kentucky bluegrass, perennial rye, and fescue, are able to photosynthesize in temperatures from about 55 to 80 degrees; they respirate in temperatures above or below.

The sport field assets analyzed for the Capacity – Demand Model are classified based on information provided by the District and includes planned 2013 upgrades for this analysis. Recommended Field Usage Guidelines based on field surfaces are presented below for both diamond assets and multi-purpose assets, with all field characteristic types shown for comparison purposes:

Figure 1 - **DIAMOND FIELD USE GUIDELINES**

Multi-Purpose Field Characteristics	Recommended Primary Use	Facility Usage Guidelines (Events/wk)	Average Total Weekly Hours	Recommended Minimum Hours Rest Per Event	Recommended Minimum Hours Rest Per Week
Synthetic	Game	69	104	N/A	N/A
Engineered/Irrigated	Game	22	33	3	88
Engineered/Non-Irrigated	Game / Limited Practice	20	30	6	120
Non-Engineered/Irrigated	Practice / Limited Game	18	28	6	108
Non-Engineered/Non-Irrigated	Practice Only	14	21	10	140

Figure 2 – **MULTI-PURPOSE FIELD USE GUIDELINES**

Field Characteristics	Recommended Primary Use	Facility Usage Guidelines (Events/wk)	Average Total Weekly Hours	Recommended Minimum Hours Rest Per Event	Recommended Minimum Hours Rest Per Week
Synthetic	Game	69	104	N/A	N/A
Engineered/Irrigated	Game	18	30	4	72
Engineered/Non-Irrigated	Game/Limited Practice	15	26	6	90
Non-Engineered/Irrigated	Practice /Limited Game	13	24	8	104
Non-Engineered/Non-Irrigated	Practice Only	10	21	12	120

In optimal turf maintenance conditions, recommended rest periods would immediately follow a single usage/event. This turf management is commonly found in professional, collegiate, and other high quality sporting venues. PROS realizes that this practice is not realistic for the parks and recreation community and does not recommend resting between individual usages.

RECOMMENDATION

PROS recommends that the cumulative rest period – the recommended minimum hours of rest per event be multiplied by the total weekly events – be applied to an asset on a weekly basis. Total programmed usage hours should not exceed the average total weekly hours of programmed events and the minimum total hours of rest per week.

Facility usage guidelines total recommended hours of weekly rest and total weekly event hours are less than the total hours available in a given week (168 total weekly hours). This allows for non-programmed usage to occur on the assets by constituents of the District.

Capacity Factors

The following factors contribute to the calculation of capacity:

- Average Season Parameters – Average season lengths based on industry guidelines and potential usages
- Field Usage Guidelines – Customized guidelines used to quantify the maximum number of weekly events an asset can support based on accepted industry practices to ensure the quality of the field is maintained at a desired level.
- Dependent upon field characteristics
  - Synthetic / Non-Synthetic
  - Engineered / Non-Engineered
  - Irrigated / Non-Irrigated
- Lighted / Non-Lighted – lighting only affects the capacity in relation to synthetic surfaces
- All non-synthetic surfaces should adhere to the usage guidelines to protect the natural turf from severe damage
- Lighted synthetic surfaces allow for usage during inclement weather and before sunrise and after sunset

- Average Length of Event – Average length of event (i.e. game/practice/special event) to be held on any given asset, depicted in hours
- Usage is calculated in hours based on District scheduling calendar
- Based on industry standards to ensure limited/manageable impact on asset
- Events are described as any of the following:
  - Pre-season practices
  - Regular season practices
  - Regular season games
  - Postseason practices
  - Postseason games
  - Special events

Demand

Demand, defined as actual usage of the asset, is calculated independently of capacity. To quantify demand for the various assets, usage by type by each individual asset was defined. User/league data is the catalyst for all demand calculations. Demand is quantified by total hours of use. Registered usage is comprised of the most recent usage records maintained by the District.

CAPACITY – DEMAND ANALYSIS

The PROS Capacity – Demand Standards Model analysis began by establishing a detailed inventory of the current assets to understand their suggested capacity to support the actual demand by the various usages. The model calculates the capacity of the current facilities based on normalized potential usage factors and exemplary industry management practices by field type (i.e., number of hours that an individual field can support without serious degradation considering a variety of factors such as whether the field is engineered, non-engineered, synthetic, irrigated, etc.). Demand is calculated by comparing the actual demand – reserved hours.

Each asset is defined by the type of field, not the use that occurs on that specific field. For example, rectangular sports fields historically utilized for football, soccer, lacrosse, and field hockey are defined as multi-purpose fields because of the limited development that is present that would inhibit a wide range of uses; these assets generally lack infield cutouts (skinned infields) associated with diamond fields, yet it is possible to program a diamond sport usage at a multi-purpose field asset.

The analysis included the following sports fields:

- Beye School
- Brooks School
- Hatch School
- Holmes School
- Julian School
- Whittier School
- Andersen Multi-purpose at Andersen Park
- Barrie Multi-purpose at Barrie Park
- Barrie Multi-purpose at Barrie Park
- Carroll Multi-purpose (S) at Carroll Park
- Euclid Multi-purpose at Euclid Square Park
- Field Multi-purpose at Field Park
- Fox Multi-purpose (E) at Fox Park
- Fox Multi-purpose (W) at Fox Park
- Lindberg Multi-purpose (N) at Lindberg Park
- Lindberg Multi-purpose (S) at Lindberg Park
- Lindberg Multi-purpose (Upper) at Lindberg Park
- Longfellow Multi-purpose at Longfellow Park
- Maple Multi-purpose (N) at Maple Park
- Maple Multi-purpose (S) at Maple Park
- Rehm Multi-purpose at Rehm Park
- Ridgeland Multi-purpose at Ridgeland Common Park
- Stevenson Multi-purpose at Stevenson Park
- Taylor Multi-purpose at Taylor Park

The total available hours for each field are based on the number of maximum recommended weekly use hours multiplied by 36 weeks per year. The Total Available Hours and The Total Hours of Use are presented in the Appendix: Summary Data by Park. The Weeks of Actual Game Use and Weeks at Rest are also shown for each field.

The weeks of overuse based on the standards are shown and for this analysis are defined as:

- 10% or less over use ..... Slight
- 25% or less over use ..... Medium
- 50% or less over use ..... Heavy
- 100% or less over use ..... Extreme

In the following table, there are two sets of data shown. The data include results of demand based on: 1) permitted hours and another set of data reflects 2) estimated actual usage of game hours.

Capacity Demand studies typically include permitted hours because information is quantified through data generated from field scheduling software. However this data has the limitation of not reflecting actual usage, or groups are permitted, but they may not use the hours allocated. Therefore, a request was made to include actual usage as compared to permitted use.

The calculations within the reports detail (i.e., individual park spreadsheets), are based on game data and not permitted data, since we know that it represents the best estimate of actual use. However, Recommended Hours (reflected in summary tables - figure 3 and 4) are derived from normal field usage weeks of the Park District multiplied by the maximum field use hours from the Sports Field Use Standards. This results in inflated recommended hours. If calculations are based only on game data, recommended hours would be significantly under estimated because they can't take into account practices, school use, park district classes, camps and other activities, or general public use, and therefore, are not a complete representation of field use and associated wear that is occurring on the fields.

REMARKS REGARDING FIGURE 3 - SUMMARY OF CAPACITY - DEMAND ANALYSIS

Utilizing the Capacity-Demands Standards Model the capacity of the current facilities was modeled based on industry standards for each type of field and the available usage and permit data for 2012 as supplied by the District and its affiliates. This analysis required entry of data from the District's facility reservation system (Rec Trac), District Programs, and the scheduled games that were run by the District and its Affiliates. "Actual" practice hours associated District Affiliated programs were not included as this data was not available at the time the model was constructed. An analysis of the results of the model showed a pattern of overuse at several facilities, but also identified the need to collect additional "Actual" use data because the existing "Facility" level permit data may not be a accurate measure of the actual use of an individual "Athletic Field". Based on the results of the Capacity Demand Standards Model the following is recommended;

- Assume 2012 to represent the baseline based on a single year of the best available data
- Identify and implement processes to capture the number of hours of "Actual" use of District athletic fields by District, Affiliate and permittee programs at both the Facility (e.g. complex of fields and other amenities) and individual field area.
- Update the Capacity Model on an annual basis with the most recent and best available data.
- Work with PD Staff, Board Members and affiliate representatives to develop standard reports and metrics that all groups can use to monitor and assess usage.
- Once the data model has been refined utilize the results to support ongoing facility investments.
- Use findings to adjust permitting practices that maximize use but also protect assets

The following should be kept in mind when viewing the Capacity-Demand Analysis:

- Recommended Hours = (# of available weeks as defined by PD) * (# of Recommend Hrs/week from Standards table)
- Permit Hours = the number of total permit/PD program hours for the facility during the available weeks.
- % Unused Permit Hours refers to the difference between permitted hours and recommended hours

A summary of utilization by field is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3 – **SUMMARY OF CAPACITY – DEMAND ANALYSIS**

Field *	Description	Recommended Hours	Permit Hours †	% Unused Permit Hours	Game Hours ‡	% Unused Game Hours	Weeks of: Use	Weeks of: Rest	Weeks of Overuse: Slight	Medium	Heavy	Extreme	Weeks Available: Limited	Available
Beye School	1MP/1 Diamond	378	847	-124.07%	103	72.75%	18	34	0	0	0	9	0	3
Brooks School	1MP/1 Diamond	210	558	-165.71%	114	45.71%	17	35	2	0	14	0	0	1
Hatch School	1MP/2 Diamonds	1040	862	17.12%	300	71.15%	26	26	0	0	0	0	0	26
Holmes School	1MP/1 Diamond	441	862	-95.46%	213	51.70%	26	26	1	0	24	0	0	1
Julian School	1MP/1 Diamond	420	862	-105.24%	208	50.48%	20	32	1	0	0	0	0	1
Whittier School	1MP/2 Diamonds	420	1,105	-163.10%	360	14.29%	21	31	0	0	0	0	0	26
Andersen Park	MP Only	168	897	-433.93%	40	76.19%	8	44	0	0	0	0	0	8
Barrie Park	1MP/1 Diamond	630	897	-42.38%	193	69.37%	21	31	0	0	0	0	0	21
Carroll Park (N)	1MP/1 Diamond	231	906	-292.21%	80	65.37%	11	41	0	0	0	0	0	11
Carroll Park (S)	MP Only	231	72	68.83%	0	100.00%	0	52	0	0	0	0	0	0
Euclid Square	1MP/1 Diamond	286	1,991	-596.15%	116	59.44%	11	41	0	0	0	0	0	11
Field Park	1MP/2 Diamonds	690	3,025	-338.41%	355	48.55%	23	29	2	0	0	0	0	20
Fox Park (E)	1MP/1 Diamond	378	879	-132.54%	59	84.39%	18	34	0	0	0	0	0	18
Fox Park (W)	MP Only	252	529	-109.92%	12	95.24%	12	40	0	0	0	0	0	12
Lindberg Park (N)	1MP/1 Diamond	690	2,388	-246.09%	346	49.86%	23	29	0	0	0	20	1	0
Lindberg Park (S)	1MP/1 Diamond	720	2,378	-230.28%	302	58.06%	24	28	0	0	0	0	0	24
Lindberg Park (UPPER)	MP Only	270	715	-164.81%	55	79.63%	9	43	0	0	0	0	0	9
Longfellow Park	1MP/1 Diamond	624	2,898	-364.42%	218	65.06%	26	26	0	0	0	0	0	26
Maple Park (N)	1MP/1 Diamond	441	2,133	-383.67%	201	54.42%	21	31	0	0	0	0	1	20
Maple Park (S)	1MP/1 Diamond	441	1,803	-308.84%	220	50.11%	21	31	0	0	0	0	1	19
Rehm Park	MP Only	168	768	-357.14%	60	64.29%	8	44	0	0	0	0	0	8
Ridgeland Common	1MP/2 Diamonds	780	3,480	-346.15%	683	12.44%	26	26	1	2	4	0	0	15
Stevenson Park	1MP/1 Diamond	480	1,956	-307.50%	63	86.88%	16	36	0	0	0	0	0	16
Taylor Park	MP Only	540	1,096	-102.96%	111	79.44%	18	34	0	0	0	0	0	18

* *Each field in the Oak Park system is identified above. However, due to outfields of baseball/softball fields & soccer fields overlapping in many cases, we have combined to show full impact to the turf.*

† *Hours actually permitted by the Park District for use by all organizations for practices, games, and other activities.*

‡ *Based on affiliate and Park District game schedules. This does not include other users or Park District clinics or classes, but it does include Park District and affiliate youth and adult leagues.*

NOTE: The actual use is difficult to determine but is it somewhere between permitted hours and game schedules. This is an art, not a science.

This table will be updated annually as use patterns, needs, and activities alter. Additionally, with the addition of Lonfrellow School, Irving School, and Ridgeland Common synthetic turf, scheduling should be adjusted to allow demand to be distributed through the system.

Capital Improvements

The following section lists recommended capital priorities related to athletic field maintenance, development, and renovation. The items are listed in short, mid and long term priorities.

Short Term 2013 to 2015.

- Purchase maintenance equipment
  - Water Reel, Aeravator, Deep Core Aeravator, and Mower
- Synthetic turf at Ridgeland Common (included in the existing Ridgeland Common project)
- Synthetic turf at Irving (partnership possibility with School District 97) anticipated $440,000. The Park District anticipates to share 50% of the expense for a new multi-purpose field
- Irrigation installation or improvements at Field, Longfellow, and Taylor for $60,000
- Laser grading Longfellow, Stevenson, and Barrie diamond fields $13,500
- Turf blankets for Barrie and Taylor $7,200

Mid Term 2016 to 2017

- Laser grading for Euclid Square, Field, and Maple for each multi-purpose and diamond field $30,000
- Irrigation at Carroll, Fox, and Euclid Square. $60,000 is earmarked for irrigation in the CIP and is recommended to go to those sites.

Long Term 2018-2019

- Synthetic field turf at Stevenson for both diamond and multi-purpose fields for $1,000,000. Stevenson is selected in favor of other parks as a result of the lights at this park. Stevenson already has $900,000 allocated for 2018 improvements, which can go toward complete renovation of fields including irrigation.

Field turf possibilities include the following locations: Irving School, Stevenson, Ridgeland Common, Longfellow. The recommended priorities include:

1. Ridgeland (already specified as part of the overall Ridgeland Common improvement project)
2. Irving (partnership possibility with School District 97) $400,000 is the Park District's anticipated share of the expense.
3. Stevenson (lights already at the site, which maximizes the use) 50 yd. by 90 yd.

Taylor Park multi-purpose is less suitable as the existing field slopes and would require extensive re-grading. Longfellow and Lindberg Parks include both multi-purpose fields, overlaid with a ball diamond, which creates a challenge for sports turf, as ideally both fields would need to have artificial turf installed, which would be costly. The same is true for Stevenson, but lights exist at this site which would optimize use of the turf. Anticipated costs for installation of sports turf is $1.1 million for a multi-purpose field and $400,000 for a diamond field.

Recommendations

Along with the capital recommendations, there are operational and maintenance recommendations as outlined within the body of the report. These are included in the listing below and include a timeframe of short, mid and long term.

Short Term 1-2 years, 2013 and 2014

- Repeat the field assessment process on an annual basis, document improvements, and revise rankings.
- Work with affiliate groups to consider establishing a cap on numbers of registrants in programs.
- Facilitate staff training on an annual basis. After the initial training session offered by the Consulting Team, the training in subsequent years can be provided by the newly hired Athletic Field Manager.
- Revise and approve the Integrated Pest Management policy and include the progression of techniques to control pests. Document improvements annually. Quantify the use of chemicals and measure year to year with the intended goal of reducing total amount applied.
- Follow the practices outlined from the Turfgrass Management Calendars and Report of Site Inspection for Ridgeland Common, Field, Barrie, Lindberg, and Taylor Parks as outlined by James A. Fizzell and maintenance practices outlined within the report.
- Consider the possibility of staggering maintenance staff hours to ensure availability of support after 3:30 p.m.
- Increase off-season ball field maintenance activities to reduce weeds, and potential ruts.
- Strengthen the relationship with the affiliate groups. This can include:
  - Develop an annual orientation program for affiliate groups and review policies, permitting, field rotation, Carry In Carry Out program. This can be held at the beginning of the season and will be particularly useful for changes in leadership of the affiliate groups.
  - Improve documentation of roles and responsibilities between affiliate groups and Park District staff to reduce confusion of assignment of responsibility
  - Develop a process to assess user satisfaction; development of a survey instrument to assess groups' satisfaction toward working with the District
  - Review capital plans related to athletic fields with stakeholder groups.

Mid Term 3-4 years 2015 and 2016

- Develop a measurement system for athletic field improvement such as: calculating the amount of sod installed annually, total maintenance cost per field, customer satisfaction, field inspection results.

- In the comparison of other agencies, field rental charges were less than other Districts. This should be reviewed to determine if the fees assessed are appropriate.
- Park maintenance staff mentioned the need for additional storage space for equipment. Identify solutions to remedy this.
- Research the possibility of installing portable lights at selected locations as a way of maximizing field use.
- Research the possibility of charging affiliates and users for field use.

Long Term 5-7 years 2017 through 2019

- The long term goal is to have all fields at a "3" level, which is a satisfactory level. Using the information generated from the report, implement recommendations for individual parks based on the priority of improvements needed as outlined in the Field Assessment section of the report.
- School sites generally had much lower turf quality than Park District sites. A long term goal may be the Park District's taking over the responsibility for field maintenance.

Appendix: Summary Data by Park

BEYE SCHOOL

Non-Engineered/Non-Irrigated		*Hours*
Recommended Hours of Use		378
Total Hours of Game Use		103
Weeks of Actual Game Use		18
Weeks at Rest		34
Weeks of Overuse		9
Frequency of Overuse:	Slight	0
	Medium	0
	Heavy	0
	Extreme	9
Availability (Weeks):	Limited	0
	Available	3

HOLMES SCHOOL

Non-Engineered/Non-Irrigated		*Hours*
Recommended Hours of Use		441
Total Hours of Game Use		213
Weeks of Actual Game Use		26
Weeks at Rest		26
Weeks of Overuse		25
Frequency of Overuse:	Slight	1
	Medium	0
	Heavy	24
	Extreme	0
Availability (Weeks):	Limited	3
	Available	1

BROOKS SCHOOL

Non-Engineered/Non-Irrigated		*Hours*
Recommended Hours of Use		210
Total Hours of Game Use		114
Weeks of Actual Game Use		17
Weeks at Rest		35
Weeks of Overuse		16
Frequency of Overuse:	Slight	2
	Medium	0
	Heavy	14
	Extreme	0
Availability (Weeks):	Limited	0
	Available	1

JULIAN SCHOOL

Non-Engineered/Non-Irrigated		*Hours*
Recommended Hours of Use		420
Total Hours of Game Use		208
Weeks of Actual Game Use		20
Weeks at Rest		32
Weeks of Overuse		1
Frequency of Overuse:	Slight	1
	Medium	0
	Heavy	0
	Extreme	0
Availability (Weeks):	Limited	0
	Available	1

HATCH SCHOOL

Engineered/Non-Irrigated		*Hours*
Recommended Hours of Use		1,040
Total Hours of Game Use		300
Weeks of Actual Game Use		26
Weeks at Rest		26
Weeks of Overuse		0
Frequency of Overuse:	Slight	0
	Medium	0
	Heavy	0
	Extreme	0
Availability (Weeks):	Limited	0
	Available	26

WHITTIER SCHOOL

Non-Engineered/Non-Irrigated		*Hours*
Recommended Hours of Use		420
Total Hours of Game Use		360
Weeks of Actual Game Use		21
Weeks at Rest		31
Weeks of Overuse		0
Frequency of Overuse:	Slight	0
	Medium	0
	Heavy	0
	Extreme	0
Availability (Weeks):	Limited	0
	Available	26

ANDERSON MULTI-PURPOSE

ANDERSEN MULTI-PURPOSE AT ANDERSEN PARK

Non-Engineered/Non-Irrigated		*Hours*
Recommended Hours of Use		168
Total Hours of Game Use		40
Weeks of Actual Game Use		8
Weeks at Rest		44
Weeks of Overuse		0
Frequency of Overuse:	Slight	0
	Medium	0
	Heavy	0
	Extreme	0
Availability (Weeks):	Limited	0
	Available	8

CARROLL MULTI-PURPOSE (S) AT CARROLL PARK

Non-Engineered/Non-Irrigated		*Hours*
Recommended Hours of Use		231
Total Hours of Game Use		0
Weeks of Actual Game Use		0
Weeks at Rest		52
Weeks of Overuse		0
Frequency of Overuse:	Slight	0
	Medium	0
	Heavy	0
	Extreme	0
Availability (Weeks):	Limited	0
	Available	0

BARRIE MULTI-PURPOSE AT BARRIE PARK

Engineered/Irrigated		*Hours*
Recommended Hours of Use		630
Total Hours of Game Use		193
Weeks of Actual Game Use		21
Weeks at Rest		31
Weeks of Overuse		0
Frequency of Overuse:	Slight	0
	Medium	0
	Heavy	0
	Extreme	0
Availability (Weeks):	Limited	0
	Available	21

EUCLID SQUARE MULTI-PURPOSE AT EUCLID SQUARE PARK

Engineered/Non-Irrigated		*Hours*
Recommended Hours of Use		286
Total Hours of Game Use		116
Weeks of Actual Game Use		11
Weeks at Rest		41
Weeks of Overuse		0
Frequency of Overuse:	Slight	0
	Medium	0
	Heavy	0
	Extreme	0
Availability (Weeks):	Limited	0
	Available	11

BARRIE MULTI-PURPOSE AT BARRIE PARK

Non-Engineered/Non-Irrigated		*Hours*
Recommended Hours of Use		231
Total Hours of Game Use		80
Weeks of Actual Game Use		11
Weeks at Rest		41
Weeks of Overuse		0
Frequency of Overuse:	Slight	0
	Medium	0
	Heavy	0
	Extreme	0
Availability (Weeks):	Limited	0
	Available	11

FIELD MULTI-PURPOSE AT FIELD PARK

Engineered/Irrigated		*Hours*
Recommended Hours of Use		690
Total Hours of Game Use		335
Weeks of Actual Game Use		23
Weeks at Rest		29
Weeks of Overuse		2
Frequency of Overuse:	Slight	2
	Medium	0
	Heavy	0
	Extreme	0
Availability (Weeks):	Limited	0
	Available	20

FOX MULTI-PURPOSE (E) AT FOX PARK

Non-Engineered/Non-Irrigated		*Hours*
Recommended Hours of Use		378
Total Hours of Game Use		59
Weeks of Actual Game Use		18
Weeks at Rest		34
Weeks of Overuse		0
Frequency of Overuse:	Slight	0
	Medium	0
	Heavy	0
	Extreme	0
Availability (Weeks):	Limited	0
	Available	18

LINDBERG MULTI-PURPOSE (S) AT LINDBERG PARK

Engineered/Irrigated		*Hours*
Recommended Hours of Use		720
Total Hours of Game Use		302
Weeks of Actual Game Use		24
Weeks at Rest		28
Weeks of Overuse		0
Frequency of Overuse:	Slight	0
	Medium	0
	Heavy	0
	Extreme	0
Availability (Weeks):	Limited	0
	Available	24

FOX MULTI-PURPOSE (W) AT FOX PARK

Non-Engineered/Non-Irrigated		*Hours*
Recommended Hours of Use		252
Total Hours of Game Use		12
Weeks of Actual Game Use		12
Weeks at Rest		40
Weeks of Overuse		0
Frequency of Overuse:	Slight	0
	Medium	0
	Heavy	0
	Extreme	0
Availability (Weeks):	Limited	0
	Available	12

LINDBERG MULTI-PURPOSE (UPPER) AT LINDBERG PARK

Engineered/Irrigated		*Hours*
Recommended Hours of Use		270
Total Hours of Game Use		55
Weeks of Actual Game Use		9
Weeks at Rest		43
Weeks of Overuse		0
Frequency of Overuse:	Slight	0
	Medium	0
	Heavy	0
	Extreme	0
Availability (Weeks):	Limited	0
	Available	9

LINDBERG MULTI-PURPOSE (N) AT LINDBERG PARK

Engineered/Irrigated		*Hours*
Recommended Hours of Use		690
Total Hours of Game Use		346
Weeks of Actual Game Use		23
Weeks at Rest		29
Weeks of Overuse		0
Frequency of Overuse:	Slight	0
	Medium	0
	Heavy	0
	Extreme	0
Availability (Weeks):	Limited	0
	Available	23

LONGFELLOW MULTI-PURPOSE AT LONGFELLOW PARK

Non-Engineered/Irrigated		*Hours*
Recommended Hours of Use		624
Total Hours of Game Use		218
Weeks of Actual Game Use		26
Weeks at Rest		26
Weeks of Overuse		0
Frequency of Overuse:	Slight	0
	Medium	0
	Heavy	0
	Extreme	0
Availability (Weeks):	Limited	0
	Available	26

MAPLE MULTI-PURPOSE (N) AT MAPLE PARK

Non-Engineered/Non-Irrigated		*Hours*
Recommended Hours of Use		441
Total Hours of Game Use		201
Weeks of Actual Game Use		21
Weeks at Rest		31
Weeks of Overuse		0
Frequency of Overuse:	Slight	0
	Medium	0
	Heavy	0
	Extreme	0
Availability (Weeks):	Limited	1
	Available	20

RIDGELAND FIELD AT RIDGELAND COMMON PARK

Engineered/Irrigated		*Hours*
Recommended Hours of Use		780
Total Hours of Game Use		683
Weeks of Actual Game Use		26
Weeks at Rest		26
Weeks of Overuse		7
Frequency of Overuse:	Slight	1
	Medium	2
	Heavy	4
	Extreme	0
Availability (Weeks):	Limited	0
	Available	15

MAPLE MULTI-PURPOSED (S) AT MAPLE PARK

Non-Engineered/Non-Irrigated		*Hours*
Recommended Hours of Use		441
Total Hours of Game Use		220
Weeks of Actual Game Use		21
Weeks at Rest		31
Weeks of Overuse		0
Frequency of Overuse:	Slight	0
	Medium	0
	Heavy	0
	Extreme	0
Availability (Weeks):	Limited	1
	Available	19

STEVENSON MULTI-PURPOSE AT STEVENSON PARK

Engineered/Non-Irrigated		*Hours*
Recommended Hours of Use		480
Total Hours of Game Use		63
Weeks of Actual Game Use		16
Weeks at Rest		36
Weeks of Overuse		0
Frequency of Overuse:	Slight	0
	Medium	0
	Heavy	0
	Extreme	0
Availability (Weeks):	Limited	0
	Available	16

REHM MULTI-PURPOSE AT REHM PARK

Engineered/Irrigated		*Hours*
Recommended Hours of Use		168
Total Hours of Game Use		60
Weeks of Actual Game Use		8
Weeks at Rest		44
Weeks of Overuse		0
Frequency of Overuse:	Slight	0
	Medium	0
	Heavy	0
	Extreme	0
Availability (Weeks):	Limited	0
	Available	8

TAYLOR MULTI-PURPOSE AT TAYLOR PARK

Engineered/Irrigated		*Hours*
Recommended Hours of Use		540
Total Hours of Game Use		111
Weeks of Actual Game Use		18
Weeks at Rest		34
Weeks of Overuse		0
Frequency of Overuse:	Slight	0
	Medium	0
	Heavy	0
	Extreme	0
Availability (Weeks):	Limited	0
	Available	18