

**AGENDA STATEMENT
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION**

TO: Parks and Recreation Commission
FROM: Carl Alameda, Director of Administrative Services
DATE: November 8, 2017
SUBJECT: **Discussion of Synthetic Turf on the Oak Grove Field.**

RECOMMENDATION:

Parks and Recreation Commission discuss potential for the installation of synthetic field turf on the LCHS Oak Grove Field.

BACKGROUND:

The Oak Grove Field located on the La Canada High School campus is a multi-use Joint Use Field, maintained and scheduled by the City of La Cañada Flintridge. The City under the Joint Use Agreement has access to the field weekdays after 5:00 PM and all-day on Saturdays and Sunday. In 2006, the City with the support of the Youth Athletic Groups, completed a project to install field lights on the Oak Grove Field. The Youth Athletic Groups contributed \$100,000 over five-years toward the project, the City fronted the full cost of \$125,000 for the project. This project made Oak Grove one of two fields in the City with athletic field lights.

Given this field has field lights, it experiences a higher level of usage throughout the year, leading to deteriorating field conditions. This impact is magnified by the fact this location has never drained well and in the wetter fall months the grass is more acceptable to being adversely impacted.

The primary athletic uses of the Oak Grove Field in the Fall (September – December) is youth soccer and in the Spring (January – mid July) youth and high school Softball. It is during the Fall months the field is most adversely affected, as Soccer is a more intense usage and the field tends to be more vulnerable due to the wet field conditions.

The Parks and Recreation Commission, over the years, has worked toward implementing increased protections for the Oak Grove Field, including:

- 1) A “Hard Closure” of the Field during Closure Periods;
- 2) Extended Closure Periods in the Winter and Summer;
- 3) Age Usage Limitations for Youth Soccer (lessing the impact of larger children).

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Overall the Oak Grove Field has responded well with the limitations on use imposed by the Parks and Recreation Commission. However, in January when the field reverts back to its primary softball usage the grass typically is still damaged from the Fall season.

With these challenges, the discussion of synthetic field turf began with the LCHS Softball Coaching Staff. Such fields are not extremely common, but are starting to take hold in Southern California. Currently, this solution for football and soccer fields is common. La Canada High School's own football field is field turf, which was recently replaced after being in place for over a decade.

Recently, Notre Dame High School in Sherman Oaks installed a state of the art baseball stadium using synthetic turf. One of the unique facets of the Notre Dame facility is the skinned infield area is natural dirt. This would also be a preference for the coaching staff of the LCHS Softball program. The Notre Dame administration has extended an invitation to any member of the LCHS Coaching Staff and/or Maintenance Staff who wish to visit their facility and ask any questions, should this project move forward.

FUNDING/CAPITAL COSTS:

The City performed a very primary cost estimate to better guide the discussion regarding the potential replacement of the Oak Grove Field grass to a field turf playing surface. It should be noted; these projects have an extremely wide degree of costs based upon existing conditions and the extent of the project. The Notre Dame project had a cost of over \$3 million, but was a completely new stadium starting from bare dirt including new stadium stands, a press box, locker rooms, fencing, field lights, and score board.

The cost projections do not include maintenance costs of the facility and are solely an estimate of construction costs:

Description	Unit Cost	Square Footage	Total Cost
Base Preparation	\$ 3.25 per sq. ft.	84,900	\$275,925.00
Materials and Installation	\$ 4.50 per sq. ft.	84,900	\$382,050.00
TOTAL ESTIMATED PROJECT COST			\$657,975.00

To date, this potential project has been discussed at the Joint Use Committee level, simply to gauge the interest of the La Canada Unified School District (LCUSD). The School District is largely indifferent to the project and would not be a likely participant in the funding of the project.

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The LCUSD sees one major downside, which is they would lose the ability to park vehicles on the Oak Grove Field, if turfed, for their major events like graduation and homecoming.

The potential project's main advantages are largely all to the benefit of the City's Youth Use Groups, as follows:

- 1) Wider use of one of the only two lighted fields;
- 2) No (or shorter) Annual Field Maintenance Closure Periods (currently 8 to 10 weeks per year);
- 3) Access to field for all age levels of soccer usage;
- 4) Fewer "Inclement Weather" Closures;

Given the advantages lay largely with the Youth Athletic Groups, they would be expected to incur most, if not all, the costs of the project. City staff is bringing this item at this time, as the December 2017 Annual Field Scheduling meeting would be the appropriate time to engage the field users in this discussion to gauge their interest in further exploring this project.

OPTIONS:

1. Provide direction to staff to pursue cost estimated to install synthetic field turf on the Oak Grove Field and make a formal presentation/request to the Youth Athletic Users at the Commission's December 13, 2017 meeting.
2. Direct staff not to pursue synthetic field turf on the Oak Grove Field at this time.
3. Take no Action and provide direction to City staff.