



CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA
SPORTS FIELDS NEEDS UPDATE

WINTER 2014/15



Youth Sports Advisory Board

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Recreation, Parks, & Cultural Activities

Park Planning, Design + Capital Development
Recreation Services
Park Operations

INTRODUCTION

The City of Alexandria maintains 51 fields or open spaces used for athletic purposes, such as soccer, football, lacrosse, rugby, baseball, and softball. Due to the density of population in the City, these fields are very heavily programmed. While some of the newer sites, particularly the synthetic turf fields, are able to accommodate this intense use, many of the fields are deteriorating and in need of investment.

Since 2009, Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities staff have conducted several studies to assess the needs for field space and how to prioritize those needs. The following report summarizes the progress and provides updates on the findings in those studies. This report will assist in informing future maintenance, planning, and Capital Improvement Program decisions.



Rectangular Fields

Current Demand

The 2009 RPCA Athletic Fields Study found 9,546 youth and adults participated in RPCA sports programs on rectangular fields (approximately 7% of the 143,903 residents). The study, shown as an addendum to this report, found that the demand for field use was 24,085 hours of playing time. To meet this demand, RPCA needed four lighted synthetic fields or 21 natural turf fields.

Since that time, the City and ACPS have built four synthetic rectangular fields to meet most of the 2009 demand (not current demand):

- Brenman, including lights (2010)
- 2 fields at Witter, including lights (2013)
- Upper Hammond, without lights (2013)
- The field at Jefferson-Houston will be complete in 2015

Future Demand

Census findings estimate that by calendar year 2020, the City of Alexandria population will increase to 153,205. If RPCA continues to have 7% enrollment in sports programs, the demand for playing hours will increase to 27,058 (2,973 additional hours). Therefore, to meet the expected growing population, the City will need two additional synthetic turf fields converted by 2020. This number only includes programmed RPCA use, not school use of the fields, and does not assume increased interest in RPCA programs.

Staff has planned the following fields to meet this future need:

1. Hensley field is planned for conversion through the City's CIP in FY18
2. Alexandria Renew Enterprises (formerly Alexandria Sanitation Authority) at Eisenhower (expected to be built in 2016, but may be re-purposed by ARE in 2025)
3. Ramsey Recreation Center field conversion is included as part of the Beauregard Development plan



Brenman Park



Witter Fields

Maintenance

Synthetic Fields typically have a 10-year life span and then must be re-carpeted to remain in good condition. The following fields are scheduled for re-carpeting in the City's CIP:

1. Minnie Howard
 - Estimated cost: \$1.6m (includes field expansion and new lights)
 - Scheduled for FY17 in City's CIP
2. Ft. Ward
 - Estimated cost: \$500,000
 - Scheduled for FY18 in City's CIP
3. Upper Hammond
 - Estimated cost: \$500,000
 - Scheduled for FY19 in ACPS CIP
4. Ben Brenman
 - Estimated cost: \$500,000
 - Scheduled for FY20 in City's CIP
5. Witter
 - Estimated cost: \$1m (two fields)
 - Scheduled for FY22 in City's CIP

RECTANGULAR FIELDS

In addition to synthetic turf fields, Four Mile Run Park, Chinquapin Park and Simpson Park (built as part of the Potomac Yard Development) have regulation size natural turf fields requiring maintenance. Chinquapin Park, in particular is in poor condition. The Citywide Parks Improvement Plan recommends a full renovation of the Chinquapin fields to serve both sports and open space needs. The plans show the fields as engineered natural turf at a cost ranging from \$756,262 to \$960,282. The FY15-24 CIP budget does not fund this recommendation.

In May 2012 and in July 2013, the City of Alexandria Youth Sports Advisory Board (YSAB) participated in a feedback exercises to identify all maintenance and site issues at the City fields. YSAB is affiliated with the Parks and Recreation Commission and includes a representative from each of the sports leagues, ensuring that all programmed uses are equal at the table. For the exercise, the Staff posted aerial images of all the fields on a wall and participants used post-it notes to record their experiences and opinions of the sites. The list on the following page tracks the feedback and subsequent maintenance responses.



FEEDBACK & ACTION ITEMS

Youth Sports Advisory Board Field Exercise - 2013 Update

RPCA MAINTENANCE ITEMS

Short/Long Term	Site	Issue	Notes/Action Item	Next Step	Spring 2013 Update
	Braddock	Cut off the Shortcut to metro	Staff will review options, including fencing and/or signage, to determine the most effective means to deter shortcuts.	Place deterrent this fall and monitor for effectiveness	Permanent fence installed in Winter 2013
		Softball fields not well maintained	Field is maintained to current standard for practice fields – dragging of infield 3 times/week and bi-weekly grass mowing during the play season.	Staff will review the field enhancement options and costs with schools for possible implementation this fall, subject to the availability of the funding.	Removal of contaminated top layer of exposed soil, clean top soil imported and placed, aerated and over seeded.
	Fort Ward Field	field lining colors an issue	Lines have been repainted	None	N/A
	Simpson Stadium Baseball Field	Nail drag needs to be used on more consistent basis	Nail drag can only be used when the infield mix is water saturated. However, due to the baseball game schedules, this can only take place periodically.	Staff will nail drag prior to games as often as schedule will allow.	Condition of infields improved dramatically when crew received new a ball field machine. Nail drag used as often as schedule allows.
		High graded cushion needed against the backstop	Staff will coordinate with Mac and TC Williams for the purchase, cost sharing, and the installation of a new backstop cushion this fall.	Contact Mac and T C Williams' baseball coach to coordinate.	New padding arrived but did not come with proper hardware to install. Staff to install ASAP with help from TC.
		Water to the field needs to be turned on earlier in the spring to accommodate TC schedule;	System is winterized. As such, the water cannot be turned on for late February practices.	Staff will review weather and temperatures to determine if request for early turn on of water can be accommodated in the spring, 2013.	Water turned on first week in March. Colder than normal spring caused a delay.
	Little Simpson	the infield grass is "worn out" and needs to be re-seeded or otherwise repaired	This field was over seeded on 9/01/12	Staff will monitor for growth and coverage, and over seed again, if necessary.	Over seeding to occur in Fall after season. Field condition has improved.
		water pools along 1B line in infield so regarding needs to occur there	This area has been re-graded. A reduction in pooling was observed as of 9/7/12.	Staff will monitor this area while mowing and add infield mix and re-grade as required to reduce pooling.	Premium infield mix imported and placed to address this issue.
		The batting cage netting is wearing out and should be replaced.	One net is in disrepair.	This net will be replaced in the fall, 2012.	Netting purchased and ready for installation by Little League.
	Big Simpson	New home plate and pitching rubber needed (currently misaligned)	They were replaced in spring 2012 for both fields, and appear in good shape.	Monitor for wear.	Complete
		Bunker at big Simpson has to be re-graded to stop flooding	Staff has installed an aggregate French Drain along the entrance to address the flooding (Work completed on 9/6/12).	Monitor for flooding	Bunker scheduled for removal as part of CIP project
	Hensley Rectangular	Grass is worn at Rectangular Field	Staff is contracting with Premier Sports to repair the worn areas of the field.	Staff is contracting with Premier Sports to repair the worn areas of the field.	Repairs completed. Implemented a nutrient management plan
	Brenman Baseball	Skin the infield (#1 priority for ALL)	Purchase Order submitted	schedule work	
	Mt. Vernon Field	Field is heavily used and grass surface is in need of repair	Staff will aerate and apply a mixed perennial rye grass seed to repair the field. This work will be scheduled in September, 2012	Top dress the field in future, as needed.	2012 Over seeding was completed and the field will undergo another top dressing summer 2013
	Luckett	The field has poor drainage and the infield is "sandy" in its consistency.	Staff is contracting with Premier Sports to repair the worn areas of the field.	Staff will work with Park Planning Division to explore capital Maintenance funding for this project.	Included in the Proposed FY14-23 budget for a CFMP project in FY15

DIAMOND FIELDS

Diamond Fields

In 2014, 4,257 people participated in sports programs on diamond fields. This includes sponsored programs, affiliates, rentals and camps. It accounts for roughly 3% of the population in the City of Alexandria. The census estimates the population will increase to 153,205 in 2020. If we continue at the current rate of enrollment there will be an additional 390 players (4,657 total) by 2020.

On October 14, 2014, the City of Alexandria Youth Sports Advisory Board participated in a feedback exercise to identify all current maintenance and site issues at the City's diamond fields. Staff posted aerial images of all fields on a wall and participants used post-it notes to record their experiences and opinions of the sites. The following table provides a list of the comments on each site and a coordinated RPCA response, where necessary:

Ownership	Site	YSAB Post-it Note Comment from exercise on October 14, 2014	RPCA Response/Action Item
SHORT-TERM ACTION ONCE PROGRAM DECISIONS MADE			
RPCA	Stevenson Baseball Field	No comments	Potential to upgrade field, allowing less intense use on other fields
RPCA	Four Mile Field #3	Under utilized	Potential to upgrade field, allowing less intense use on other fields
RPCA	Angel Park Field	No comments	Potential to upgrade field, allowing less intense use on other fields
RPCA	Kelley Cares Miracle Field and Lee Center	Better maintenance (grass, plants, weeding)	Potential to upgrade field #1 with improved irrigation, allowing alleviation from other fields
RPCA	Kelley Cares Miracle Field and Lee Center	Great facility. We need more Miracles!	
ACPS	Braddock Softball Field #1	Multi-use turf (baseball/rugby/football/soccer/LAX)	Will begin discussions with ACPS on undertaking a comprehensive plan for recreational needs once new Potomac Yard path complete.
ACPS	Braddock Softball Field #1	Big. Not very nice	
ACPS	Braddock Softball Field #1	Good for multi-use	
ACPS	Braddock Softball Field #2	Poor upkeep	
ACPS	Braddock Softball Field #2	Big. Not very nice	
ACPS	Braddock Softball Field #2	Good for multi-use	
ACPS	Braddock Softball Field #3	Make this a complex	
ACPS	Braddock Softball Field #3	Much nicer since fences went up in all fields	
ACPS	Braddock Softball Field #3	Good space but rugby needs it	
ACPS	Braddock Softball Field #3	Big. Not very nice	
RPCA	Luckett Field	Drainage issues around the outfield area	Will look into grading needs through neighborhood parks plan to improve drainage
MID-TERM ACTION			
RPCA	Hensley Field#1	Good field. AA should fit easily	Full site renovation scheduled for FY16-18; includes 3 fields and rectangular, per the park plan
RPCA	Hensley Field#2	Prefer multi-turf field sport	
RPCA	Hensley Field#2	Drainage issues	
RPCA	Hensley Field#2	More parking	
RPCA	Hensley Field#3	Upkeep could be better	
RPCA	Hensley Field#3	Wet outfields	
LONG-TERM ACTION/DISCUSSION			
RPCA	Little Simpson Softball Field	Better drainage is needed	Improved drainage requires full re-grading; est. to cost \$100,000. Will need to look at priorities in CIP and alternative funding sources.
ACPS	Mount Vernon Field	Improve quality/durability of grass surface	Can discuss with ACPS
ACPS	Mount Vernon Field	Put futsal/multi-use court	
ACPS	Patrick Henry Lower Field	Maintenance could be better	Hold until school renovation
ACPS	Patrick Henry Lower Field	Should be turfed as multi-use	
ACPS	William Ramsay Field	Improve futsal	Hold until Beauregard turf field
ACPS	William Ramsay Field	Improve grass surface	
	Other	Use St.Stephens/St.Agnes and Episcopal fields for shared use	For ALL to negotiate use

FEEDBACK & ACTION ITEMS

OTHER/MORE INFORMATION NEEDED			
RPCA	Chambliss Park	Needs better drainage	Need more information
ACPS	Charles Barrett Baseball Field	Improve quality of grass	Drainage improvements underway
RPCA	Frank Mann Field	Parked cars are often hit by baseballs	No recent issues we are aware of; Witter netting will set precedent, if needed at FMR.
RPCA	Brenman Softball	Parking needed	RPCA will review parking during peak program time.
NO ACTION ITEMS			
RPCA	Witter Field	No comments	
ACPS	George Mason ES Ball Fields	No comments	
RPCA	Four Mile Softball Field#2	Possibility for overlay?	
RPCA	Four Mile Softball Field#2	Big, nice field	
RPCA	Frank Mann Field	Very good	
RPCA	Frank Mann Field	Nice	
RPCA	Frank Mann Field	Grass base paths	
RPCA	Frank Mann Field	Turf infield	
RPCA	Simpson Stadium Baseball Field	Some drainage issues	
RPCA	Simpson Stadium Baseball Field	Grass base paths	
RPCA	Simpson Stadium Baseball Field	Nice; one of the best fields in NoVA for a long time	
RPCA	Simpson Stadium Baseball Field	turf infield	
RPCA	Lyles Crouch	No comments	
ACPS	James K. Polk Upper Field	No comments	

Based on the comments from the Diamond Field exercise, RPCA recommends the following next steps:

1. Recreation Services will complete its migration to real-time based scheduling instead of block scheduling. Currently, users are permitted for large blocks of time and given the flexibility to use the field any time within the permit. The permit system does not reflect when users are actually on the field. A migration to real-time scheduling will show actual field use times and accurately reflect the use needs and demands.
2. If real-time based scheduling proves a demand for additional diamond fields, Park Operations, subject to the availability of the funding, will upgrade one of the following locations, shown in priority order. These fields can also be upgraded to anticipate the 2020 program demand.
 - a. Stevenson Park, upgrades may include:
 - i. Installation of irrigation in conjunction with the upcoming DEQ air quality monitoring station
 - ii. Overlay a soccer field for non-programmed use (based on the community feedback in the Neighborhood Park Plan)
 - iii. Install a portable, seasonal fence for baseball
 - b. Four Mile Run Field #3, upgrades may include:
 - i. Irrigation
 - ii. Improved infield
 - iii. New backstop and furniture
 - c. Lee Center Field #1, upgrades may include:
 - i. Extend irrigation from Miracle Field to field #1
 - d. Angel Field, this field is shown last in priority because there is no dedicated parking
3. Engage in discussions with ACPS on future of Braddock fields. These three ball fields with an overlay are the largest in the City without a clear short and long-term plan. This site has potential to provide a multi-sport facility opportunity.