

CITY OF ALAMEDA

Memorandum

To: Honorable Mayor and
Members of the City Council

From: John A. Russo
City Manager

Date: October 4, 2011

Re: Accept a Report on the Status of the City's Athletic Fields

BACKGROUND

During the meeting of July 12, 2011, the City Council conducted an extensive discussion regarding a proposed exchange of property currently owned by Harbor Bay Isle Associates (HBIA) for the site of the Mif Albright 9-hole golf course. The proposal identified the HBIA site as providing space for additional athletic fields. The City Council directed staff to return in September with a report on the status of field space currently available in the city.

The City of Alameda through the Recreation and Park Department (ARPD) maintains, operates, and schedules 11 multi-use athletic fields, as well as three dedicated single sport sites. These facilities provide programming space for a wide variety of local non-profit sports leagues, the Alameda Unified School District (AUSD), and ARPD activities. These organizations currently serve over 9,000 youth and adults annually. Athletic fields are scheduled twice a year with the cooperation of the Field Advisory Committee (a group made up of local representatives from non-profit groups), as well as AUSD and City staff, in accordance with the priority system recommended by the Recreation & Park Commission and approved by the City Council.

The provision of safe and quality playing fields is an ongoing challenge due to the continued growth of youth sports in general and the rising popularity of girl's/women's sports in particular. The expansion of traditional seasons to near year-round status has also intensified the demand for field space. This constant need for field space severely limits the City's ability to rotate use and allow adequate time for fields to recover prior to the start of the next season. It also limits the City's ability to complete required repairs and renovations.

This ongoing shortage of fields also makes it difficult for the City to generate additional revenue through rentals to outside groups and organizations. A vast majority of the field time currently available is taken up by the programs offered by dozens of non-profit groups or AUSD-sponsored leagues.

DISCUSSION

Staff is in constant contact with local field user groups in an attempt to keep up with the demand for quality field space, identify future requests, and to identify potential solutions. In a recent survey, local non-profits were asked to identify their project needs for space over the next five years. Each of the six major youth sports organizations has projected an average increase of five to seven percent in participation and corresponding field needs.

These projected increases, along with the existing demand, clearly demonstrate the need for additional field space in Alameda. During a recent meeting with the Field Advisory Committee, the group unanimously agreed that their top priority is an all-weather full size facility. This space would provide use for football, soccer, lacrosse, rugby, and any other sport requiring a full sized (110 yard) field. It would also allow for play during inclement weather; something that is not currently provided by existing natural turf fields. Secondly, the group expressed interest in an all-weather Little League field, again to provide for play during wet weather.

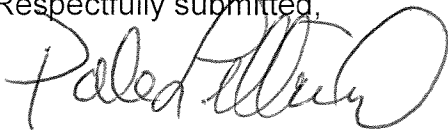
FINANCIAL IMPACT

Under the proposal presented by HBIA during the July 12, 2011 City Council meeting, funding for these new fields would be provided by a one-time payment from HBIA to the City. The City has begun discussion with businesses in Harbor Bay Business Park about how to maintain these new fields in a way to avoid an impact to the General Fund. The estimated construction cost of the full sized, multi-use field is \$1 million, with an annual maintenance cost of \$25,000. The cost of the all-weather baseball field is \$400,000, with \$10,000 in annual maintenance expenses.

RECOMMENDATION

Accept a report on the status of the City's athletic fields.

Respectfully submitted,



Dale Lillard, Director
Alameda Recreation, Parks & Golf Operations

DL:bf