

**CITY OF BOULDER
PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD AGENDA ITEM**

MEETING DATE: July 27, 2015

AGENDA TITLE: Draft Athletic Field Study Update

PRESENTERS:

Yvette Bowden, Director, Parks and Recreation
Therron Dieckmann, Deputy Director, Parks and Recreation
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Boulder is an active, sports-oriented community with a divergent and varying array of recreation interests. The mission of the Parks and Recreation Department (department) is to collaboratively provide services, facilities, and programs that focus on the health and wellness of all ages and ability levels. In 2013, staff identified the need to comprehensively evaluate the current inventory of athletic fields that are available to the Boulder community, understand how they are used, and determine if and how these fields could be used more effectively or if new facilities should be considered. To complete this initiative staff consulted with MIG Portland, to begin an Athletic Field Study (AFS) (**Attachment A**). The purpose of the AFS was to look at inventory and use information to develop data-driven recommendations and strategies for delivering high-quality facilities that meet the needs of the community while balancing this with the fiscal and physical constraints of the city and the department.

In June 2015, staff discussed the final draft report of the AFS with the PRAB. The June discussion primarily focused on the process and community outreach for developing the AFS, understanding current field supply and demand, the findings, the report recommendations, and the three-year action plan items.

During the discussion session, staff asked a series of questions to the PRAB regarding focusing on youth scheduling, the three-year action plan, and programming.

The take-away from the discussion focused on the following points:

- The term ‘youth focus’ needs to be explicitly defined in the AFS document.
- Preferences in youth scheduling is important, but this focus should not mean an exclusive use and a take-away from adult play.
- The three-year action plan needs to call out projects that can realistically be accomplished in the next three years and make an impact on field deficits and scheduling priorities.
- A PRAB representative should be identified to be a liaison during the process of implementing the three-year action plan.
- More clarity is needed on what questions (**Attachment B**) were asked of user groups to obtain demand data.

ANALYSIS

The the following steps have been taken to address the comments and concerns of the PRAB that were expressed during the June discussion:

Defining “Youth”

The Master Plan cites a necessity to enhance the safety and overall development of Boulder’s youth through parks, facilities, and services. The importance of youth engagement has consistently been a focus of the PRAB, as well. For this reason, the AFS explicitly acknowledges youth as high school age and under.

This focus is also substantiated by findings in the AFS where information gathered from athletic field user groups during the on-line and supplemental survey indicates that youth leagues account for 65 percent of field demand versus 35 percent of adult league field demand in a given week for diamond fields. Youth leagues generate 77 percent of demand versus 23 percent for adult leagues in a week for rectangular fields.

Exclusivity Versus Preferences

The AFS acknowledges and substantiates the department’s significant role in serving the interests of the athletic field youth community. The AFS also recognizes that adult leagues are important user groups of the department’s facilities and that this user group must be accounted for in any analysis of athletic field demand.

The balance of focusing on the provision of parks, facilities, and services for youth while not impacting services provided to adults is difficult to achieve. The department has limited physical assets and even more restricted space to grow in order to accommodate the full spectrum of uses, preferences, and age groups for the athletic field user groups in the City. The capital expenditures to construct and continually operate and maintain any new facilities (**Attachment C**) must also be considered when determining how to most appropriately deal with demand of a large and varied athletic field community in Boulder.

The AFS does, however, provide direction and steps in the three-year action plan, and other recommendations from Chapter 5, that the department can take in the short and

long term to engage the community in a dialogue that will lead to an inclusive and sustainable approach to field scheduling and / or renovation and development to help achieve this balance.

AFS Three-Year Action Plan

The three-year action (**Attachment D**) plan that was presented to PRAB at the June business meeting has been revised to highlight those items that have the highest probability of moving forward in the next three years and that will have the greatest potential to increase field availability to provide a wider variety of uses and skill levels. The department is prepared to act on some of the action plan items.

The 2016 CIP that was approved by PRAB and is currently waiting for City Council approval, for example, allocates \$500,000 for funds that can potentially be used to cover the short term projects listed in the three-year action plan. Planning studies looking at developing more detailed plans for the mid-term projects listed in the action plan (e.g., Stazio Ballfields, Tom Watson, and Mapleton Ballfields) also have funds identified in the 2016 CIP. Staff is also actively engaged with the BVSD in identifying a strategy for developing a new joint use agreement between the two organizations.

The action plan also identifies a number of improvements that could be made to existing facilities to provide a better level of service and make the facility more attractive to users. Some of these improvements include better parking and the provision of restroom facilities.

The items that were removed from the action plan are still relevant and are incorporated in the larger set of recommendations contained in the AFS. Removing these items will allow for the department to more effectively focus on the other action plan items.

Identify a PRAB liaison to provide feedback on the three-year action plan implementation

Staff feels that it is important to have a member of the PRAB serve as a liaison during the implementation of the three-year action plan. The intent of this position is to ensure that there is buy-in on the part of the larger PRAB as the action plan moves forward and that the projects that the department has selected will have the largest impact for all user groups.

NEXT STEPS: Feedback from the PRAB will be considered and incorporated into the final report, as necessary. The final report will be formatted and made available for release.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A: AFS Executive Summary

Attachment B: AFS On-Line User Group Survey Questions and Follow-Up Survey

Attachment C: Total Cost of Facility Operation

Attachment D: 3-Year Action Plan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The City of Boulder is an active, sports oriented community. This Athletic Field Study (AFS) provides an analysis of the BPRD's existing inventory of rectangular and diamond fields and what happens to this inventory under different supply and demand assumptions. The recommendations and action items that are derived from this analysis provide direction as to what the department can do in the next 1 to 3 years to address field programming, condition, and capacity issues. The recommendations also provide guidance on how to better position the department to be proactive in responding to and meeting future athletic field needs.

Project Purpose and Goals

The Boulder Parks and Recreation Department (BPRD) 2014 Master Plan highlighted the need to complete a comprehensive analysis of current athletic field facilities, programming, and policies to better understand our existing conditions and how groups currently use our facilities. The need for the study is an initiative of Theme 2 of the Master Plan which emphasizes the importance of taking care of existing facilities before investing in new development without having a thorough understanding of needs, funding options, and long term operational costs.

The purpose of the AFS was to look at existing conditions and use information to develop data-driven recommendations and strategies for delivering high-quality facilities that meet the needs of the community while balancing this with the fiscal and physical constraints of the department.

Process and Plan Organization

In January of 2014 the department hired the consulting office of MIG Portland, to complete the AFS. The scope of the consultant was to 1) review and evaluate existing field inventory and condition information completed by the department in 2013; 2) analyze reported field use against existing supply; 3) develop specific policy and field use / development recommendations based on quantitative information; and 4) refine the list of recommendations to a targeted group of strategies that could be implemented and advanced within 3 years of the report's completion.

The process of developing and completing the AFS occurred over three phases of work. Phase I was an analysis of the existing conditions. Phase II was an analysis of supply and demand. And phase III was the development of the recommendations and the overall report. The three phases took place over the course of approximately 1.5 years and involved the following efforts:

- Outreach to Boulder sports groups over two focus group meetings;
- On-line and paper based surveys to sports user groups;
- Review of a statistically valid community survey with elements of the survey focusing on sports and athletic field use in the City;
- Updates at public meetings during the Valmont City Park concept plan update process;
- Updates to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB); and
- Regular coordination meetings between the consultant and athletic field operational staff.

In March of 2015, Parks and Department staff completed the contract with the consultant, MIG, with the document not fully finalized. Staff finished the report in July of 2015.

Summary of Key Findings

The findings presented in the AFS identify key themes that emerged and highlight conclusions that could be made after an assessment of the qualitative and quantitative data that was gathered during Phase I and Phase II of the project. These findings set the framework for the development of the recommendations and 3-year action plan covered in Phase III.

Generally, the findings reveal that while there is a deficit of field hours when user preferences are considered. However, feedback from the community and guidance from the BPRD Master Plan indicates that an emphasis should be placed on maintaining and enhancing existing facilities before new development occurs.

While user group preferences must be taken into consideration in any analysis of athletic field supply and demand, it cannot be the singular driver of available hours and field use. The City of Boulder land use policies emphasize the desire to remain a compact, interconnected community that places high priority on the preservation and enhancement of existing physical, social and economic assets through strict managed growth. The recommendations for addressing field availability, must then respect this and focus on enhancing existing facilities, providing flexible designs, and working with partners; with new development being considered under the right circumstances.

Field Hour Surplus. Generally, BPRD has a surplus of available total weekly field hours for both rectangular and diamond fields. This surplus begins to decrease as user preferences are taken into consideration.

Availability of rectangular and diamond fields. Generally, there is a greater availability of field hours for rectangular fields versus diamond field hours.

Programs and facilities with a youth focus. Based on assumptions where youth-centered programming and policies are a focus, there is a deficiency of available field hours for diamond and rectangular fields. The position of focusing on youth of high school age and under is substantiated by findings of the AFS that indicate 65% of field demand for diamond fields and that 77% of demand for rectangular fields is generated from youth leagues versus adult leagues.

Field availability for adult leagues must be considered. Adult league play is an important component of the programs, services, and facilities provided by the BPRD. Public feedback indicates that there is a concern that a focus on youth will result in a 'take-away' from adult athletic field availability.

Population Demands. Current growth projections indicate that new rectangular and diamond fields will be necessary by 2030 to maintain current levels of service.

Year-round play. Based on user-reported field demand information, leagues are playing year-round. As such, there is a greater need for fields that can accommodate play for longer periods of the day and year.

BVSD joint use agreement. A new and strong joint use agreement with the Boulder Valley School District (BVSD) could generate significant available field hours to the athletic field inventory.

Flexible field design to accommodate wide ranging uses and ages. The diversity of field sports currently played in Boulder, as well as, the range of age groups playing requires fields that can accommodate a variety of configurations and play options.

Recommendations and the Action Plan

Based on the findings developed during Phases I and II, the AFS proposes a comprehensive set of recommendations for enhancing athletic fields and related programs and services. The full array of these proposals, while achievable, will take a significant period of time to be realized. These recommendations focus on opportunities to enhance service delivery through changes in policy, management and operations, and the investment in existing and, where appropriate, new athletic field facilities.

While the full listing of recommendations developed during the third phase of the work are covered in Chapter 4, the following are specific, actionable items that can be advanced and implemented within 3 years of the completion of the AFS.

Invest in existing facilities to maximize their use. There a number of city-owned fields or facilities within the park system, that with enhancements to field conditions, basic amenities, or the improvement to 'basic' levels of service, have the potential to increase the capacity of field use or allow for a wider variety of activities.

Short Term Rectangular Field Enhancements (1 to 2 year time period). Enhance field conditions and amenities and allow for reservations at the following sites, where necessary:

- East Palo Park
- Keewaydin Park
- Martin Park
- North Boulder Park
- Scott Carpenter Park
- Pleasantview Fields

Short Term Diamond Field Enhancements (1 to 2 year time period). Enhance field conditions and amenities and allow for a wider variety of league play:

- Martin Park
- North Boulder Park

Mid-Term Diamond Field Enhancements (2 to 3 year time period). Develop a site plan for the following fields based on new planning studies:

- Mapleton Ball Fields
- Stazio Ball Fields (Phase III)
- Tom Watson Fields

Long Term Diamond and Rectangular Field Enhancements (3+ year time period). Develop and implement a site plan for the build-out of following fields based on current master plans for the site.

- Foothills Community Park Phase III
- Valmont City Park

Work with BVSD to create a stronger Joint Use Agreement. Create a working group between BPRD and BVSD with the purpose of developing a new joint use agreement between the organizations. The joint use agreement should identify new or existing City or BVSD fields that have the greatest potential to meet the needs of both organizations and the larger community.

In the short-term, the City and BVSD should work together to identify and eliminate the barriers to reserving BVSD fields that are in the current joint use agreement but not scheduled. The use of these fields has the potential to generate approximately 1,000 hours of additional field hours between rectangular and diamond fields.

In coordination with BVSD, take a leadership role in convening agencies and organizations to improve collaboration and coordination of efforts. Both BPRD and BVSD should work in partnership to serve as a convener of local agencies and organizations with the purpose of having a greater awareness of current trends and concerns and being able to proactively plan for change.

Update BPRD's 'Policies' document for field and court assignment and permits. The document that is used for field and court allocations should be updated to reflect the Department's direction of being an organization with a focus on youth engagement and activities. This includes updating sections pertaining to user group priority ratings, field allocation criteria, and fees.

Develop criteria for tournament reservations. The section of the Policies and Procedures for Field and Court Assignments and Permits should be updated to include specific guidance on the amount of time that should be allocated to tournaments and which tournaments should have a higher priority. These updates and revisions should reflect the Department's direction of being focused on youth engagement and activity.

Pilot the use of premier rectangular fields for practice. Conduct a pilot project to allow use of Premiere diamond fields for practice for one year, with regular monitoring of turf and field conditions to determine whether this is a sustainable practice. Scheduling should take into consideration field preparation for games, which may require rotating field availability.

Fund and implement projects that will provide a better basic level of service. Fund and implement projects at existing facilities that will enhance users' experience with the provision of basic services such as restroom facilities and parking.

Continue to develop a strong model for partnerships, philanthropic efforts and recognition, and volunteer opportunities with the community and the department.

BOULDER PARKS AND RECREATION
ATHLETIC FIELD STUDY - Total Cost of Facility Operation

**City Owned and Operated -
Diamond Fields**

Aurora 7 Park

East Mapleton

Martin Park

North Boulder Park

Scott Carpenter Park

Stazio Ball Fields

Tom Watson Park

**City Owned and Operated -
Multi-Use Fields**

Columbine Park

East Boulder Community Park

East Boulder Community Park - Turf Fields

Foothills Community Park

Harlow Platts Community Park

North Boulder Park

Pleasantview Fields

Tantra Park

Tom Watson

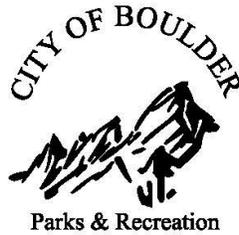
Valmont City Park

Total Cost of Facility Operation				
	Current Replacement Value	Total Facility Costs	Total Facility Revenues	T.C.F.O.
	\$ 144,000.00	\$ 936,000.00	\$ 209,760.00	\$ 870,240.00
	\$ 2,851,518.00	\$ 3,490,008.00	\$ 3,082,848.00	\$ 3,258,678.00
	\$ 48,000.00	\$ 312,000.00	\$ 37,650.00	\$ 322,350.00
	\$ 96,000.00	\$ 624,000.00	\$ 266,600.00	\$ 453,400.00
	\$ 1,136,705.00	\$ 857,460.00	\$ -	\$ 1,994,165.00
	\$ 7,757,788.30	\$ 8,143,352.00	\$ 7,456,272.00	\$ 8,444,868.30
	\$ 192,000.00	\$ 1,248,000.00	\$ 264,300.00	\$ 1,175,700.00
	\$ 90,090.00	\$ 215,800.00	\$ 283,100.00	\$ 22,790.00
	\$ 90,092.00	\$ 647,400.00	\$ 148,770.00	\$ 588,722.00
	\$ 2,804,400.00	\$ 701,320.00	\$ 1,337,320.00	\$ 2,168,400.00
	\$ 270,270.00	\$ 647,400.00	\$ 375,280.00	\$ 542,390.00
	\$ 90,090.00	\$ 215,800.00	\$ 144,210.00	\$ 161,680.00
	\$ 90,090.00	\$ 215,800.00	\$ -	\$ 305,890.00
	\$ 5,313,254.60	\$ 10,533,480.00	\$ 5,072,180.00	\$ 10,774,554.60
	\$ 157,659.00	\$ 215,800.00	\$ -	\$ 373,459.00
	\$ 90,090.00	\$ 215,800.00	\$ 72,440.00	\$ 233,450.00
	\$ 90,090.00	\$ 215,800.00	\$ 85,280.00	\$ 220,610.00

**CITY OF BOULDER - ATHLETIC FIELD STUDY
3 YEAR ACTION PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS**

	Recommendation Type			Implementation Year		
	Programmatic and Policy	Capital Expenditure	Management and Operations	2015	2016	2017
ACTION ITEMS						
Rectangular Field Enhancements - Short Term: The City has identified a number of city owned rectangular fields within the park system that, with enhancements to existing field conditions, have the potential to increase the capacity of field use to allow for a wider variety of activities. Explore and, if appropriate, fund enhancements at the following park sites and allow for field reservations. - East Palo Park - Keewaydin Park - Martin Park - North Boulder Park - Scott Carpenter Park		X			X	
Diamond Field Enhancements - Short Term: The City has identified a number of city owned diamond fields within the park system that, with enhancements to existing field conditions, have the potential to increase the capacity of field use to allow for a wider variety of activities. Explore and, if appropriate, fund enhancements at the following park sites and allow for field reservations. - Martin Park - North Boulder Park						
Diamond Field Enhancements - Mid-Term: Fund and initiate a series of middle term athletic diamond field developments to increase field capacity. - Mapleton ball fields - Stazio ball fields (Phase III) - Tom Watson		X			X	
Diamond and Rectangular Field Enhancement - Long Term: Fund and initiate a series of long range athletic field developments to increase field capacity. - Foothills Community Park (Phase III) - Valmont City Park		X				X
Create a working group between BPRD and BVSD with the purpose of developing a new joint use agreement between organizations.	X		X	X	X	
Take a leadership role in convening agencies and organizations to create a Sports Council for the purpose of enhancing athletic fields and sports opportunities in Boulder.	X			X		
Update BPRD's 'Policies' document for field and court assignment and permits. The document that is used for field and court allocations should be updated to reflect the Department's direction of being an organization with a focus on youth engagement and activities. This includes updating sections pertaining to user group priority ratings, field allocation criteria, and fees.	X		X	X	X	
Develop criteria for tournament reservations. The section of the Policies and Procedures for Field and Court Assignments and Permits should be updated to include specific guidance on the amount of time that should be allocated to tournaments and which tournaments should have a higher priority. These updates and revisions should reflect the Department's direction of being focused on youth engagement and activity.	X		X	X	X	
Conduct a pilot project to allow use of Premiere diamond fields for practice for one year, with regular monitoring of turf and field conditions to determine whether this is a sustainable practice. Scheduling should take into consideration field preparation for games, which may require rotating field availability.	X	X			X	
The City intends to fund and implement select projects at existing athletic fields that will provide a better basic level of service. - Pleasant View Fields: Restroom and parking - East Boulder Community Park: Restroom and Parking		X			X	
Continue to develop a strong model for partnerships, philanthropic efforts and recognition, and volunteer opportunities with the community and the department.	X		X	X	X	X

**City of Boulder Parks and Recreation
Athletic Field Study**



Note: Which logo is current or preferred? We would like to include your logo in the online questionnaire, as well as on the focus group agendas.

Dear Sports Enthusiasts,

We are one step closer to developing new policies and recommendations for the use and development of athletic fields in the City of Boulder. In September 2012, many of you participated in a meeting and online survey to help us identify sports field deficiencies and needs. We are building on that information, and have some follow-up questions that will ask for details about your teams by division. Please have that information handy as you fill out the questionnaire.

Thank you for your continued dedication to enhancing sports and athletics in Boulder!

Sincerely,

Teri Olander

1. Please write in your organization name. <write-in>
2. Name of person filling out this questionnaire. <write-in>
3. Email: <write-in>
4. Phone: <write-in>
5. What is your organization's affiliation or federation? Examples: AYSO, ASA. <write-in>

6. How many seasons does your league play? This means regular seasons, not including individual tournaments.

- 1 (Answer Q7, Skip Q8)
- 2 (Answer Q7, Q8)
- Year-round (Skip to Q9)
- Other <write-in> (Answer Q7, Q8)

7. How long is the primary season? (This will include answer choices for the respondent to select all that apply to define the season)

- January
- February
- March
- April
- May
- June
- July
- August
- September
- October
- November
- December

8. How long is the secondary season? (This will include answer choices for the respondent to select all that apply to define the season)

- January
- February
- March
- April
- May
- June
- July
- August
- September
- October
- November
- December

9. Does your organization host tournaments?

- Yes
- No (Skip to 11)

10. Please provide more information about the tournament(s) you host, including time of year, tournament location and city, and number of teams. <write-in>

11. Do you prefer a type of field surfacing?

- Natural turf
- Artificial turf
- Both, depending on age or skill level of players
- No preference, as long as field is in good condition

This next section of the questionnaire will ask for detailed information about each division in your organization.

12. (This will be a write-in question, and the respondent will get as many lines they need)

Name of Division (example: Boys U8)	Number of teams in most recent season	Average # of Practices Per Week	Average # of Games Per Week	Field Locations Used

13. Are there City of Boulder (not School District) fields that you do not like to use?

- Yes
- No <Skip to Q15>

14. Why don't you like these fields?

- Not conveniently located
- Not lighted
- Condition is poor
- Can't get there by bike or by foot
- Not enough parking
- No restrooms
- Number of fields or time slots does not work for our league
- Players and families don't like going to this part of town
- Other <write-in>

15. Are there fields you wish you had more access to? <write-in>

16. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about athletic fields in Boulder?
<write-in>



**City of Boulder Parks and Recreation
Athletic Field Study**

Dear Sports Enthusiast,

We are missing some critical information from your league that could affect the new policies and recommendations for City athletic fields. We have already collected information from most sports leagues in Boulder, and would like to make sure your league is represented in our Athletic Field Study.

Time is of the essence. Please respond to four short questions noted below. Thank you!

Sincerely,
Teri Olander

1. Please confirm the total # of teams in your league based on the most recent season.

_____ # of teams

2. Approximately what % of your players reside in Boulder? (For baseball, if possible, indicate the % of Boulder players needing regulation (90' fields) and the % of younger Boulder players needing smaller fields.)

3. On average, how many practices and games do you hold per week?

_____ Average # of practices per week

_____ Average # of games per week

4. Do your practice and game time slots fit the assumptions noted in the table below?

Sport	Practice Time Slots	Game Time Slots
Baseball	2 hours	3 hours, adult 2 hours, youth
Softball	2 hours	1 hour, adult 1.5 hours, youth
Football	2 hours	2 hours
Rugby	2 hours	2 hours
Soccer	1 hour, U10 & below 1.5 hours, U11 & above	1.5 hours, U10 & below 2 hours, U11 & above
Lacrosse	2 hours	2 hours
Ultimate	N/A	2 hours
Kickball	N/A	1 hour

_____ Yes, we need that much time for games and practices.

_____ No, we need the following amount of time for youth play and adult play (indicate how much time is needed for games and practices):