



# Seattle Parks & Recreation

## Open House Notes

### Loyal Heights Playfield Turf Replacement Project

September 10, 2018

6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Loyal Heights community Center, 2101 NW 77<sup>th</sup> Street, Seattle WA

Attendees: 10 participants

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#### Project Overview

Libby Hudson, project planner, provided an overview of project, which will include:

- Resurfacing the existing turf (initially installed in 2007) as it has reached the end of its service life and warranty
- The new synthetic turf system will include an infill alternative to crumb rubber – either cork or another alternative material, and an e-layer or other cushioning pad to meet attenuation standards for youth athletics
- Improving access to the lower restrooms located in the community center to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and potentially other sections of the concrete pathway that circles the field;
- Replace two drinking fountains to also meet ADA standards

Schedule: The project schedule includes: Design through Summer 2019; Construction beginning mid-July 2019

The project budget is \$2.38 million for planning, design and construction (construction budget being \$1.4 million). CJ de Leon, Project Manager explained that Parks will be working with a consultant in selecting the appropriate synthetic turf system, including the cushioning pad. These pads function similarly to the pads under house carpeting and come in different grades. Some need to be replaced each time the synthetic turf needs replacement (about every 10 years), others can wear very well and can be used for several cycles of turf replacement. Parks will be working with our consultant to select the best system for this field.

Libby noted that Loyal Heights Playfield is one of the early synthetic field installations by Parks (installed in 2007) and it is in dire need of replacement, along with other fields in the system. CJ added the Parks has almost 30 synthetic fields now and we are beginning a cycle of replacing the synthetic turf on these, in a systematic rotation. Parks is looking at developing an appropriate specification for turf replacement for these fields, beginning with Loyal Heights Playfield.

CJ also explained that that he had a consultant investigate the existing field underdrainage system with a camera, and it appears that the system is in good shape and won't need repairs.

Sports currently played on the field include football, baseball/softball, soccer and lacrosse. Parks has an online survey to gather information from the sports users and neighbors of the field users regarding the project. One question in the survey asks what other sports are desired and should be lined on the synthetic turf. Libby noted that more than 100 people responded to the online survey. The survey only has a few questions and is very helpful to Parks in gathering input on the proposed project. Many responders wanted to see the addition of Ultimate Disc sport at the playfield. In addition, many of the responders to the open comment question said that they had concerns about crumb rubber infill material and wanted an alternative. The survey will remain open for more comments and others are invited to participate if they have not. The survey link is provided on the meeting materials and on the project web page. We will be sharing this information with the consultant.

### **Discussion - Questions and Comments**

- Will metal cleats be allowed on the turf?  
Response: We have not selected the turf system at this point, but we will keep that question in mind as we move forward in design.
- There is an off-leash dog problem at the playfield now and I don't see any signs out there. I'm assuming dogs are destructive to the synthetic turf.  
Response: Dogs are not allowed on any of the Parks playfields, and dogs can damage both the natural and synthetic turf fields. We will review the "no dogs" signs and may include additional signs as warranted.
- Do synthetic turf systems require less maintenance and lower costs than natural grass turf fields?  
Response: We have not done that analysis. The on-going weekly maintenance is less for synthetic turf fields, but the synthetic turf needs to be replaced about every ten years, so the costs may be fairly equal - but the ability to use the synthetic fields on a daily bases is higher here in the northwest, so there are other reasons that synthetic turf is desirable on certain fields.
- What kind of ongoing maintenance is involved for synthetic turf fields?  
Response: Occasionally, the infill of the turf needs to be "fluffed" to distribute the infill evenly. Parks has equipment for that – a "fluffer machine" that is pulled behind a gator utility vehicle. Also, the fill needs to be supplemented when it falls below the required depth. We are also considering the wear areas that occur around bases, home plate and the pitching area. These sections may need to be replaced in between the full, 10 plus year replacement cycle for the field. We are looking at the best method for this – cutting out the worn turf areas and gluing down new replacement turf in those areas.
- How are the bases and pitching mounds handled on a synthetic turf field?  
Response: The baseball field layout allows for multiple base locations with built-in locations for the bases to meet Little League to Adult baseball dimensions. The bases are anchored into place at three different locations that are fixed on the field. The bases are moved to one of the three slots. For the pitching mound - it is also moveable. These are removed when the field needs to be used for football. Often, leagues bring their own portable mound.
- Does Parks still have any natural turf fields?

Response: Yes, most of our fields are grass. There are approximately 27 synthetic turf fields in Parks system, but some a mix of grass and synthetic, such as what is going in at Ballard Playfield. The Seattle School District also has many synthetic fields.

- What happens to the old synthetic surface?

Response: Removal is part of the construction contract. The old material is rolled up – infill and all – and hauled away to be recycled. Unfortunately, we cannot offer pieces to neighbors for personal use as requested by one neighbor, as the removal/recycling is part of the construction process.

- Are all the existing synthetic fields different – with different synthetic turf systems used?

Response: Most of the Parks synthetic fields are from one producers and include crumb rubber infill, which we have moved away from. Bobby Morris Playfield at Cal Anderson Park, was constructed with cork infill as a pilot. It is wearing well, and Parks will continue with cork infill or another alternative to crumb rubber infill, provided it can meet our needs for recreational play.

- What's the object of the proposed underlayment?

Response: The underlayment is intended to add cushioning to meet the attenuation standards to reduce impact. There are multiple pad types and levels of value as discussed earlier. We will rely on our consultant to help select the best cushioning for the field.

- Will that mean that the field will be higher in elevation?

Response: No. The profile of the turf system will remain the same so we can meet the existing elevations of the concrete field border. That means that the turf may be a bit shorter.

- What are other infill options?

Response: There are multiple options for infill, all fairly costly at this point when compared to the cost of crumb rubber infill. Some of the other infill options include cork mixed with coconut fiber, sand, plastic coated sand, and TPE (thermo plastic elastomer), among other alternatives. Parks will consider these and other options as part of the synthetic turf system selection .

- Comment: I prefer cork; it's a natural material.

- Is the project open ended?

Response: No. The synthetic field turf system selected, along with the other components need to fall within the budget.

- Question from Parks: We haven't had much attendance at the ballfield project meetings. Given that the unknowns of this project are limited to the specific synthetic turf system to be used and the design of the accessible route to the restrooms; does the group think another meeting is warranted?

Group Response: The group discussed who wasn't in attendance – field user groups – and speculated why they were not there. One participant representing sports-user groups noted that many of the league leaders are volunteers and put their efforts into the league they represent and have no more capacity for additional meetings. The group agreed that another meeting would not be needed provided the project web page is kept up to date, including posting designs and the selected synthetic turf system when decided. Another participant suggested displaying samples of the selected turf and

infill system at the Loyal Heights Community Center. Another person suggested that the materials list would also be important for people concerned about the infill material.

### **Next Steps**

The project webpage will be updated with the meeting notes. The online survey will be open until the end of September to allow others to provide feedback on the proposed project. Once Parks has a schematic design, it will be posted on the project webpage. Also, at an appropriate stage in the process, Parks will provide a display sample of the synthetic turf system at Loyal Heights Community Center, as suggested.

If you have further questions, comments or concerns, please email Libby Hudson at [Libby.hudson@seattle.gov](mailto:Libby.hudson@seattle.gov). Check the project website to follow the project – <https://www.seattle.gov/parks/about-us/current-projects/loyal-heights-playfield-turf-replacement>