Seattle
Parks & Recreation

Athletic Fields Task Force: Summary of Recommendations

Background

The focus of their work was to update the Seattle Parks and Recreation and Seattle Public School Joint Athletic Facilities Development Program, which was last adopted in 2002. The Joint Athletic Facility Development Program Update identifies and prioritizes athletic facility improvements on Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) and Seattle Public Schools (SPS) properties. For decades SPR and SPS have been partners in providing athletic fields and facilities for youth and adults. As inactivity rates have increased in the United States among youth and adults it has become more important to provide facilities where people can play a range of sports or hold recreation events such as fun runs. Through the ongoing support of elected officials and Seattle residents, SPR and SPS have successfully improved the city's inventory of athletic fields over the past 21 years. The 2019 JAFDP Update will be used by SPR and SPS in planning and prioritizing athletic field and facility improvements.

Membership and Staffing

The Seattle Parks and Recreation Sports Advisory Committee and representatives from Friends of Athletic Fields served as the role of the Athletic Facilities Task Force. Membership included: Scott Bailey, Ryan Brown, Jessica Beckton, Tara Davis, Chris Delaune, Kristen Eberling, Bill Farmer, David Griffiths, Scott Laigo, Jude La'Rene, Philip (Skip) Norton, Ian O'Hearn, James (Vic) Roberson, and Philip Jackson Stava.

SPR staff supporting this effort included Kathleen Conner and Courtney Brown.

Recommendations

The following recommendations appear in the 2019 Joint Athletic Facilities Development Program Update. The full agreement is available at https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/ParksAndRecreation/PoliciesPlanning/JAFDP_Final_12.13.19.pdf.

1. Create a joint SPR-SPS technical group to identify best practices and "lessons" learned for athletic fields design, construction, and maintenance.
2. Reserve some hours at fields in low opportunity/underserved areas for unscheduled, drop-in play.
3. Use racial equity as one of the criteria for identifying future priority synthetic conversions or new fields and for programming decisions.
4. Complete the funded and partially funded synthetic field conversions and lighting projects in Table 2.
5. Complete planning for unfunded, future projects via partnerships in Table 2.
6. Consider renovating grass fields, including upgrading irrigation and drainage systems, and turf and infield conditioning improvements in Table 2.
7. Provide consistent funding for ongoing, preventative, and major maintenance to extend the life cycle of athletic facilities.

8. Seek partnerships, grants, and donations to help fund field improvements and long-term maintenance costs.
9. Institute more efficient scheduling methods and tools.
10. Develop consistent scheduled field use data collection and entry terms for ease of tracking and data analysis across SPS and SPR systems.
11. Periodically monitor and assess city population growth and field conditions, capacity, and demand, and develop plans to address the identified needs.