



MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Park Commissioners
FROM: Andy Sheffer
DATE: June 12, 2014
SUBJECT: Infill Material for Synthetic Turf Replacement Project at Bobby Morris Playfield.

Requested Board Action

No formal action is requested. This is an opportunity for the Commissioners to be informed of the infill material selection for the Synthetic Turf Replacement Project at Bobby Morris Playfield.

Background

Synthetic turf fields require replacement approximately every ten years. In 2016, the field at Bobby Morris Playfield on Capitol Hill is scheduled for replacement. Seattle Parks and Recreation has selected to use TPE (Thermo plastic elastomer), a non-toxic and food grade plastic, as infill material to better assure the safety of users and decrease the tracking of material off the field. This direction is project specific and has not been approved as a standard to be used throughout the Department. Until a comprehensive study is conducted to assess the health risks of synthetic turf fields, the department has not made a decision on future synthetic turf field renovations or developments other than at Bobby Morris Playfield.

A recent health concern, highlighted by the media, asserts that crumb rubber pellets made from recycled tires, contain carcinogens that have potentially led to illness among athletes. There has been no clear investigation into the connection between cancer and crumb rubber infill. However, Seattle Parks and Recreation has elected to change infill materials on the Bobby Morris Playfield renovation project to reduce concerns that users are being harmed by materials used to make their fields.

The recently adopted Parks Legacy Plan highlights the Parks mission, values, outcomes and a basic services continuum. The decision to be pro-active and seek an alternative infill material on our only field to be renovated in 2016 stems from our Mission to provide safe opportunities to play and the Key Outcome of healthy people.

Other Considerations

- As one of the fastest growing cities in the country, our direction on this renovation will influence other cities and it will support the need for a thorough, science based, study of infill materials.

- Increasing density and increasing diversity change the demands for parks and recreation services thereby increasing the need for synthetic turf fields that offer year round scheduling and high performance standards equally distributed across the city.

Additional Information

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