

Los Alamos County Artificial Turf Study Community Engagement Meeting #1

Date: October 30, 2024
Time: 5:30-7:30pm
Location: Fuller Lodge
Attendees: 13 community members (6 in-person, 7 online)
 Cory Styron, Los Alamos County Community Services Director
 Wendy Parker, Los Alamos County Parks Superintendent
 Many Abeyta, Los Alamos County Assistant Parks Superintendent
 Linda Lindstrom, Los Alamos County Senior Management Analyst
 Chelsea Ashcraft, Los Alamos County Senior Management Analyst
 Ania Pastuszezewska, NV5 Project Manager
 Lisa Gavioli, NV5 Project Manager
 Shasta Meehan, Sites Southwest Landscape Designer
 Todd Smith, R&R Engineers Principal Engineer

Question/Comment	Response
There are a large number of injuries each year due to the condition of the natural turf.	Field maintenance and pest management issues will be given focused consideration in the study, in collaboration with County staff.
Adult softball season is May through October, and there are around 1000 participants. It would be great to extend this season by installing artificial turf.	Extending the playing season is noted as an important benefit of installing artificial turf.
There has been an uptick in injuries related to gopher holes. Health and safety of the athletes is a high priority for field conditions.	Athlete health and safety will be given focused consideration in the study.
Please consider artificial turf on Byers field.	Noted.
Little League season is March to June. Artificial turf would help the players get on the fields sooner in this season.	Extending the playing season is noted as an important benefit of installing artificial turf.
Appreciation for the efforts of County staff to maintain the fields.	Noted.
300-400 kids per year participate in baseball and softball. Existing fields cannot accommodate all games.	Rate of field usage is being given focused consideration in the study.
Prepping the fields takes extra time in advance of the games.	If field use is properly scheduled, LAC staff prep the fields accordingly. However, if field use is unscheduled, the fields will not be prepped in advance.
Safety concerns, especially on Bomber Field.	Athlete health and safety will be given focused consideration in the study.
Drainage concerns at Flint. A portion of the retaining wall washed out, and drainage has made the field unplayable.	Noted.
Early in the season, artificial turf would be a big advantage. Extending the season is an important benefit.	Extending the playing season is noted as an important benefit of installing artificial turf.
Consider adding a soccer field in the outfield when installing turf at Overlook so it can be dual purpose.	Noted. The team is looking at options for flex fields.

Question/Comment	Response
Consider adding artificial turf to Flint. It is a good candidate because it is a very highly used field, more than Dara Jones.	LAC staff need schedules from leagues to better manage field use.
LAPS values athlete experience and safety as top priorities.	Athlete health and safety will be given focused consideration in the study.
County staff does a ton of maintenance, but it is a huge area to cover. Often parents help filling in gopher holes.	Noted.
Bomber and Senior outfields are frequently in unsafe condition due to gopher holes.	Athlete health and safety will be given focused consideration in the study.
Baseball/softball tryouts are in early February generally. When these have to happen on concrete, it is not a good athlete experience. The season (including pre-season) runs late January to early May. Natural turf fields are unusable until they are no longer frozen. Extending field use with artificial turf would be a big advantage for LAPS athletes.	Extending the playing season is noted as an important benefit of installing artificial turf.
Field user meetings are an effective way to coordinate scheduling. LASA has had no conflicts using the fields.	LAC staff need schedules from leagues to better manage field use.
Scheduling has not been a concern. Field users make their own schedule and coordinate with County staff. Communication has been transparent.	
Sometimes scheduling conflicts occur, but these can generally be worked out among the groups.	
The field user meetings (especially the spring one) that the County holds are well attended and effective.	
Artificial turf fields will be more desirable, and there will be more competition for use.	Noted.
Artificial turf is a fantastic tool, but not the complete answer to issues with fields.	Noted.
Artificial turf will be hot in the summer/warmer months - something to consider. Perhaps retaining some sprinklers to cool off fields would be an option?	Irrigation benefits for artificial turf fields will be considered in the study.
Dara Jones was not usable this past year because of its condition / safety concerns.	Dara Jones was just renovated in 2024 with leveling and new natural turf.
Might consider alternative materials for artificial turf - other colors for rubber.	Noted.
Concerns about carcinogens in artificial turf.	Team is compiling available information to address these concerns.
As the Los Alamos and White Rock communities grow, there will be more players, which will lead to more instances of field overuse.	LAC staff need actual schedules from youth leagues to better manage field use.
A well-presented and safe field encourages players.	Noted.
The transitions between infield and outfield are not smooth.	Condition noted.
At Lou Cavaglia, the outfield is sloping away.	Condition noted.
Improvements are needed at dugouts.	Condition noted.
Gophers are a consistent issue in all areas.	Field maintenance and pest management issues will be given focused consideration in the study.
Adult softball has teams from Taos, Espanola, Cuba, Santa Fe, all over. White Rock fields are more convenient and have better weather.	Location preference noted.

Question/Comment	Response
Temperature differences between Overlook Park and North Mesa Rec Area are significant, especially in the early season. White Rock fields are more affected by monsoon season, and more lightning at North Mesa. The heat is worse at Overlook in June/July, but Overlook is more convenient. Both locations have pros/cons.	Location pros/cons will be given focused consideration as the team begins to generate recommendations.
Would consider Saturday options at North Mesa and Overlook during weekdays.	Noted.
People who live in Los Alamos are not as excited to travel to White Rock for games/practices, but people who live in White Rock are fine traveling to Los Alamos. Would be great to have artificial turf in both locations.	Noted.
Some families experience frustration with boys HS and girls HS games happening at the same time in different locations. Having HS baseball and HS softball game fields in the same location with artificial turf would be preferred.	Opportunities for field consolidation / reconfiguration are being given focused consideration as the team begins to generate recommendations.
Co-locating baseball and softball game fields would increase game attendance and create opportunities for more inter-generational exposure.	
Tournaments would benefit from co-location of fields, especially multi-age tournaments. Tournaments would also increase revenue. Co-location of game fields for baseball and softball would present fundraising opportunities with concessions. Possible opportunity to introduce food trucks.	
Co-locating baseball and softball game fields would present opportunities for new programs and sharing of coaches, as well as increasing support for athletes by HS athletes supporting middle school and youth, etc.	
Concession stands are underutilized because they are run by volunteers.	Comments regarding concession utilization, restrooms, parking, batting cages and opportunities for facility improvements and amenities are noted and will be taken into consideration.
Concessions would be better utilized if baseball and softball game fields were co-located.	
Concessions are a big fundraising opportunity that would benefit from co-locating baseball and softball game fields.	
North Mesa could use improved restrooms. Concessions at North Mesa could also be improved. Parking concerns at North Mesa stem from multiple events happening simultaneously.	
Parking issues at Overlook, especially for Little League.	
Parking at Overlook gets congested, especially around soccer games. People crossing the road is a safety issue.	
Facility needs: lights at Hope, batting cages everywhere, storage at North Mesa, bathrooms and running water, changing rooms for athletes, concession stands	
Interested in artificial turf for soccer.	Opportunities for artificial turf are being considered for baseball, softball, and soccer fields at North Mesa and Overlook.

Question/Comment	Response
Adding lighting to soccer fields would greatly increase playing time.	Lighting additions and upgrades are being considered in the study. If adding additional lights, we will need to consider and mitigate neighborhood impacts.
Lighting would be beneficial for all sports in extending playing time.	Lighting additions and upgrades are being considered in the study. If adding additional lights, team will need to consider and mitigate neighborhood impacts.
White Rock and North Mesa have different lighting systems. No preference between the two (call-in versus manual).	
Games have been limited by lack of lighting (adult softball).	
Lighting updates are needed and could improve safety without over-lighting facilities.	
Adding lighting to soccer fields would greatly increase playing time.	
Could use safety netting at some of the fields at Overlook, especially fields 1, 2, 3, and 4, to protect cars and people.	Request for safety netting noted.
Having a flat and level playing surface for soccer greatly improves quality of game and athlete experience.	Noted.
Caution that artificial turf gets very warm in mid-summer and that cuts/scrapes can get irritated or infected by artificial turf.	Team will review available studies and research regarding human impacts of artificial turf.
Artificial turf fields are hot, and irrigating them may cool them down but also creates humidity (different problem - drawback).	
Extending the playing season is a huge benefit for artificial turf.	Extending the playing season is noted as an important benefit of installing artificial turf.
What are the maintenance requirements for artificial turf?	Additional maintenance equipment required for artificial turf fields will be considered in the study.
Is the County considering purchasing specialized equipment for artificial turf maintenance?	Additional player equipment required for artificial turf fields will be considered in the study.
Sullivan gets dragged for trash and infill. Two full-time people manage/groom fields once/month.	Experience of maintaining other existing artificial turf fields in the area is an important consideration.
Players would love artificial turf. When Sullivan got turf, everyone wanted to be on it. Turf is popular and desired.	Experience using other existing artificial turf fields in the area is noted.
Younger kids are afraid of sliding on dirt. They are less afraid of artificial turf.	
Little League has scheduled some games in Pojoaque to give kids the different experience of playing on artificial turf.	
For adult softball, there are two turf fields in Angel Fire and one in Albuquerque. Games are more competitive on artificial turf fields, and they are great for tournaments.	
Another potential drawback of artificial turf is that players can't eat sunflower seeds on turf.	Noted.
Players will need two sets of cleats (metal and rubber) because metal cleats are not allowed on artificial turf. Right now, players use metal cleats for practice and home games and rubber cleats for away games where there is artificial turf.	Natural and artificial turf have different player equipment requirements. This is being considered in the study. Team is investigating about how coaches, athletes, and parents feel about equipment requirements.

Question/Comment	Response
Preference for dirt pitching mounds because artificial mounds are not desired.	Artificial mounds bounce and have less traction, making pitching more challenging than on natural dirt. This is being taken into consideration. One option that could be considered is having a movable artificial mound.
Santa Fe High School has dirt infield with artificial outfield - this might be an option to consider.	Noted. Team is looking into multiple options for design of artificial turf fields.
Major companies have improved the design to increase playability. Look into movable parts that can be switched around based on preferences. Consider dirt pitching mound. Artificial turf will attract more attendance / participation.	
Transportation to White rock for players is an ongoing issue. The circulation bus runs 45 minutes late, and there is a lack of communication between the school district and sport schedules.	Transportation to/from locations is being taken into consideration in the study.

Next Meeting: January 30th at Fuller Lodge at 5:30pm