



ATHLETIC FIELDS MASTER PLANNING

Staff Report: June 2016 Update

Recreation Department
Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development
SomerStat
June 3, 2016
Somerville, MA

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Original March presentation can be found at:

http://www.somervillema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2016%20athletic%20fields_v2_DRAFT.pdf

Introduction

In a time when the nation faces a well-documented epidemic of youth and adult obesity, it is imperative that we as a community provide a range of opportunities for our residents— young and older—to reap the benefits of physical activity. At the same time, with nearly 80,000 people in 4.1 square miles, the value of expansive, natural open spaces in Somerville for unprogrammed recreation and environmental health is also important. Balancing these two goals is the crux of the fields conversation in our city. In a city as diverse as ours, it's a given that we will all not always agree and that all sides will need to respect one another's opinions and work together toward compromise.

The City strives to increase opportunities for physical activity in many ways. We're increasing walkability and bikability. We are steadily increasing our community's green space. We're expanding recreational programming and keeping school sports no-fee. Along with these improvements and policies, providing quality athletic fields for team sports forms a core component of this critical effort.

But just as we have data-based, strategic plans for the maintenance and improvement of our roads and sidewalks, we need long-range, data-informed planning to ensure we maintain and grow our field infrastructure to meet the standards that our residents deserve and demand—especially our youth athletes. With this revised Fields Master Planning Staff Report, we aim to formalize and make transparent our efforts around fields planning and to launch an overhaul of our field maintenance management and plan.

For the first time in Somerville's history, we have access to hour-by-hour, season-by-season field usage data thanks to innovations in the City's Recreation Department. Our interdisciplinary staff team included data specialists, planners, landscape architects, engineers and construction managers. As with all of the City's policy development, this plan is guided by thoughtful feedback, comments, and constructive criticism from our community members and elected officials.

The plan lays out a path for steady rehabilitation of our overtaxed fields. It sets priorities for a schedule of major improvements and renovations as well as new field creation and acquisition. It also strives to balance the sometimes conflicting preferences of our remarkably diverse and engaged community. The key example we've encountered over the past year is advocacy around the question of whether new playing surfaces should utilize natural or synthetic materials.

This plan seeks to respect both interests. It proposes preserving natural grass fields wherever possible and introducing synthetic turf fields where absolutely needed to meet field demand. Where the plan recommends rebuilding natural grass playing surfaces, the City will utilize best management practices to maintain safe and playable surfaces. Where the plan recommends installing synthetic playing surfaces, the City will select the highest quality materials and installation techniques to ensure health and safety for our athletes.

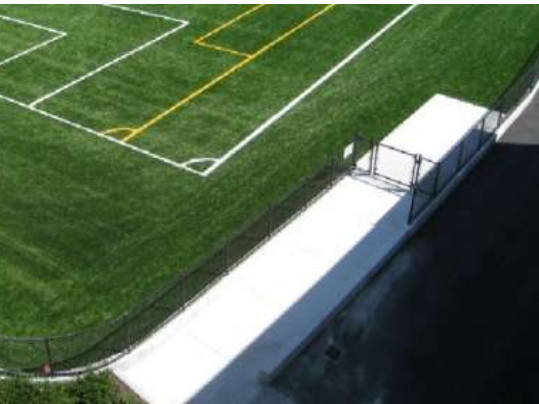
It is important to understand that even with the benefit of this strategic plan, the City will not be able to meet our field needs immediately. This effort will take time. Renovating fields properly is a lengthy and intensive process. Building or renovating a new field is a multi-season project. Arranging for improvements for fields not owned by the City, such as Dilboy and Foss, will require coordination with the State. Ensuring our ability to fund improvements will require spreading out our financial investments over time. So we ask for patience as we work steadily toward our goals, and we will in turn plan strategically to accommodate uses temporarily displaced by field renovations.

It is also vital that this plan remain a living, flexible document. We need to maintain the ability to adjust to changing factors and seize new opportunities that may arise to acquire new field space (such as the newly available opportunity to create a new field as part of the renovation of Somerville High School). We look forward to working with our residents to keep the plan current in this wonderfully dynamic community we call home.



ATHLETIC FIELDS MASTER PLANNING Staff Report: June 2016 Update*

*Slide presentation and plan originally presented in two community meetings held in March, 2016.





Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone
invites you to participate in



Athletic Fields Master Plan Meeting

Wednesday March 9, 2016

East Somerville Community School Cafeteria,
50 Cross Street at 6:30 pm

*with Spanish, Portuguese and Haitian Creole Interpretation

Tuesday March 15, 2016

West Somerville Neighborhood School Cafeteria,
177 Powder House Blvd at 6:30 pm * English only

More info: <http://www.somervillema.gov/news/somerville-hold-fields-master-planning-public-meetings-mar-9-15>

Contact Luisa Oliveira at LOliveira@somervillema.gov or (617) 625-6600 ext 2529

The City of Somerville is on Facebook & Twitter.

ONE CALL TO CITY HALL
3 1 1
SOMERVILLE



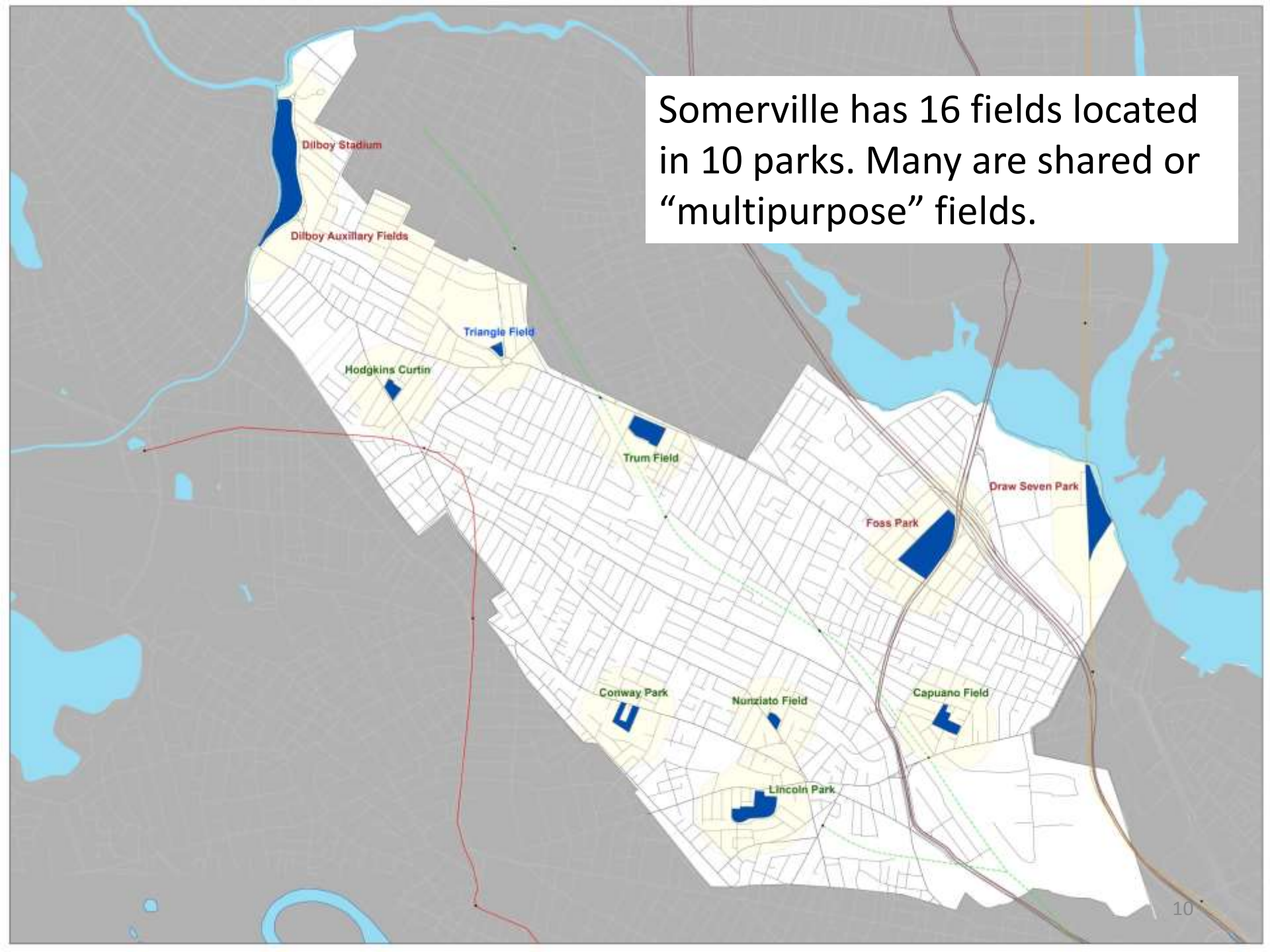
2 Community meetings



Guiding principles

- Meet community's values and athletic needs
- Due to ever-evolving needs and factors beyond the City's control (i.e., non-City-owned fields), balance predictability and flexibility
- Base plan in data
- Build as component of Open Space & Recreational Plan
- Update regularly

Somerville has 16 fields located in 10 parks. Many are shared or “multipurpose” fields.



Our parks & open spaces are a citywide resource



Start with our community values



Recognize that athletics fields are a unique open space resource

- They accommodate a specific use that cannot be accommodated elsewhere
- This use is intensive & creates unique maintenance and investment challenges
- Bottom line: we have to treat them differently in terms of planning, access & maintenance

Our challenge

- How do we balance user needs and available resources in a way that is consistent with our community values?

Agenda

1. Somerville's fields permitting process
2. Data analysis
3. Master planning
4. Fields maintenance

1. Permitting

Somerville's field permitting process

- City permits organized athletic events on City-owned and managed fields in spring, summer, and fall (Apr. 1 – Nov. 30)

- The state Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) owns Dilbooy, Foss, and Draw Seven.

Tufts owns Triangle Field, but the City is able to permit it, with restrictions.

DCR fields

- Through a management agreement with DCR, the City is able to permit Dilboy.
 - However, the City must permit Dilboy as a regional facility (~50% of hours for non-Somerville use)
 - Permit fees must offset the facility's operating costs
- The City cannot permit Draw 7 or Foss.

How Somerville prioritizes user groups

1. High school
2. City of Somerville Recreation
3. Somerville youth athletic leagues
4. Somerville adult athletic leagues
5. Non-Somerville youth athletic leagues
6. Non-Somerville adult athletic leagues

What about “open” access to our athletic fields?

- All organized events must permit the fields
- However, community members may use fields for non-intensive, casual use (i.e., non-organized events) if the fields are not permitted & not under active maintenance

How Somerville permits fields

The image shows a screenshot of the Somerville Recreation & Youth website. At the top is a banner with a green background and white text that reads "Somerville Recreation & Youth". To the left of the text is a circular seal with the text "MUNICIPAL FREEDOM GIVES NATIONAL STRENGTH" around a central emblem. To the right of the text are several small images: a young boy in a yellow soccer jersey, a man with a dog, a group of children, and a girl swimming. Below the banner is a navigation bar with a "Browse Activities" link and a search box. On the left side, there is a vertical menu with links: Home, Announcements, Team Info, Activities, Facilities, Dept Info, Meetings, News, Affiliates, Gallery, Help, How to Register, Contact, Calendar, and City Site. The main content area is titled "Somerville Recreation Department" and contains a paragraph about the department's registration system, a "Contact Info" section with office details, and a "Follow Us On..." section with social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. On the right side, there is an "Announcements" section with four bullet points: "New Scholarship Sliding Scale Fee Application", "New Advertising Opportunities Veterans & Founders Ice Skating Rinks", "The City of Somerville outdoor athletic fields are closed for the season", and "Somerville Youth Lacrosse Somerville will be offering boys and girls youth lacrosse starting".

Browse Activities Search by Age
by Grad

- Home
- Announcements
- Team Info
- Activities
- Facilities
- Dept Info
- Meetings
- News
- Affiliates
- Gallery
- Help
- How to Register
- Contact
- Calendar
- City Site

Somerville Recreation Department

The Somerville Recreation Department is proud to provide the City of Somerville with our activity registration system and website. To get started please [Create an Account](#) with all your household information. The data provided; emergency contacts, allergies info and more, will help us better serve you. This info will also automatically fill out your registration forms.

When you're ready to complete a registration form for [activities](#) be sure to review the [How to Register for an Activity](#) page.

Contact Info
Contact the Office: Somerville Recreation Department
Phone: 617-625-6600 ext. 2980
Office Hours: 8:30AM - 4:30PM

Follow Us On...

- Facebook
- Twitter
- YouTube

Announcements

- New Scholarship Sliding Scale Fee Application. See Dept Info under forms section. ([Read More](#))
- New Advertising Opportunities Veterans & Founders Ice Skating Rinks. See Dept Info under forms ([Read More](#))
- The City of Somerville outdoor athletic fields are closed for the season. For more information ... ([Read More](#))
- Somerville Youth Lacrosse Somerville will be offering boys and girls youth lacrosse starting ([Read More](#))

Account Info

- Account Login
- Create Account

How Somerville permits fields

<https://www.somerville.com/info/calendar/default.aspx?r=0>

Locations
-- Select Location --

October 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat				
				8:30am-12:30pm Tot/Time Tuesdays and Thursdays (Session 1) 11:15am-12:30pm US PE Class 1am-3am Lexey University Baseball 3am-3:30am PE & JV Game 4am-4:45am DHS Soccer Practice 7am-8am Beginning Songwriting 7am-8am DHS Soccer Games 8:30am-9am DHS Football Practice 8:30am-9:30am DHS Soccer Practice 9am-9am US Club Tennis 9:30am-7:30pm DHS Tiddlers 9am-9:30am DHS U10 9:30am-9:30pm DHS U12 9:30am-7:30pm DHS 9am-8am Newbury College Soccer 9am-9am DHS 8am-11am Fall Men's Rec Adult Softball League 6:30am-8am Back to Basics Girls Basketball Program 7pm-10pm SDS Adult Soccer League 9am-10:30pm BISC Coed Adult Soccer	7am-7:30am GCRC Morning Practices 8:15am-9:30am US PE Class 8:15am-11am Somerville Home School Recreational Soccer 9am-9:30am DHS Soccer Practice 9:30am-9:30am Newbury College Soccer 9:30am-7:30pm DHS Tiddlers 9am-9:30am DHS U10 Games 9am-8pm Kristian event 11am-12:30pm DHS U14 soccer games 11am-1pm Newbury College Soccer Game 12:30pm-8pm Fundraising Softball Tournament 1pm-3:30pm PE & JV Game 3pm-8pm DHS Soccer Games 9am-10:30pm SDS Fall Baseball Practice 9pm-9:30pm Newbury College Soccer Game	8am-6pm DHS U12 8am-12:30pm DHS U14 Games 8am-6pm DHS U12 8am-6pm DHS Tiddlers 8am-6pm DHS Tiddlers 8am-6pm DHS U14 8am-6pm DHS U10 9am-11am DHS U14 Games 9am-8pm Kristian event 11am-12:30pm DHS U14 soccer games 11am-1pm Newbury College Soccer Game 12:30pm-8pm Fundraising Softball Tournament 1pm-3:30pm PE & JV Game 3pm-8pm DHS Soccer Games 9am-10:30pm SDS Fall Baseball Practice 9pm-9:30pm Newbury College Soccer Game	8am-6pm DHS U12 8am-12:30pm DHS U14 Games 8am-6pm DHS U12 8am-6pm DHS Tiddlers 8am-6pm DHS Tiddlers 8am-6pm DHS U14 8am-6pm DHS U10 9am-11am DHS U14 Games 9am-8pm Kristian event 11am-12:30pm DHS U14 soccer games 11am-1pm Newbury College Soccer Game 12:30pm-8pm Fundraising Softball Tournament 1pm-3:30pm PE & JV Game 3pm-8pm DHS Soccer Games 9am-10:30pm SDS Fall Baseball Practice 9pm-9:30pm Newbury College Soccer Game	8am-6pm DHS U12 8am-12:30pm DHS U14 Games 8am-6pm DHS U12 8am-6pm DHS Tiddlers 8am-6pm DHS Tiddlers 8am-6pm DHS U14 8am-6pm DHS U10 9am-11am DHS U14 Games 9am-8pm Kristian event 11am-12:30pm DHS U14 soccer games 11am-1pm Newbury College Soccer Game 12:30pm-8pm Fundraising Softball Tournament 1pm-3:30pm PE & JV Game 3pm-8pm DHS Soccer Games 9am-10:30pm SDS Fall Baseball Practice 9pm-9:30pm Newbury College Soccer Game	8am-6pm DHS U12 8am-12:30pm DHS U14 Games 8am-6pm DHS U12 8am-6pm DHS Tiddlers 8am-6pm DHS Tiddlers 8am-6pm DHS U14 8am-6pm DHS U10 9am-11am DHS U14 Games 9am-8pm Kristian event 11am-12:30pm DHS U14 soccer games 11am-1pm Newbury College Soccer Game 12:30pm-8pm Fundraising Softball Tournament 1pm-3:30pm PE & JV Game 3pm-8pm DHS Soccer Games 9am-10:30pm SDS Fall Baseball Practice 9pm-9:30pm Newbury College Soccer Game	8am-6pm DHS U12 8am-12:30pm DHS U14 Games 8am-6pm DHS U12 8am-6pm DHS Tiddlers 8am-6pm DHS Tiddlers 8am-6pm DHS U14 8am-6pm DHS U10 9am-11am DHS U14 Games 9am-8pm Kristian event 11am-12:30pm DHS U14 soccer games 11am-1pm Newbury College Soccer Game 12:30pm-8pm Fundraising Softball Tournament 1pm-3:30pm PE & JV Game 3pm-8pm DHS Soccer Games 9am-10:30pm SDS Fall Baseball Practice 9pm-9:30pm Newbury College Soccer Game

2. Data analysis

Data sources

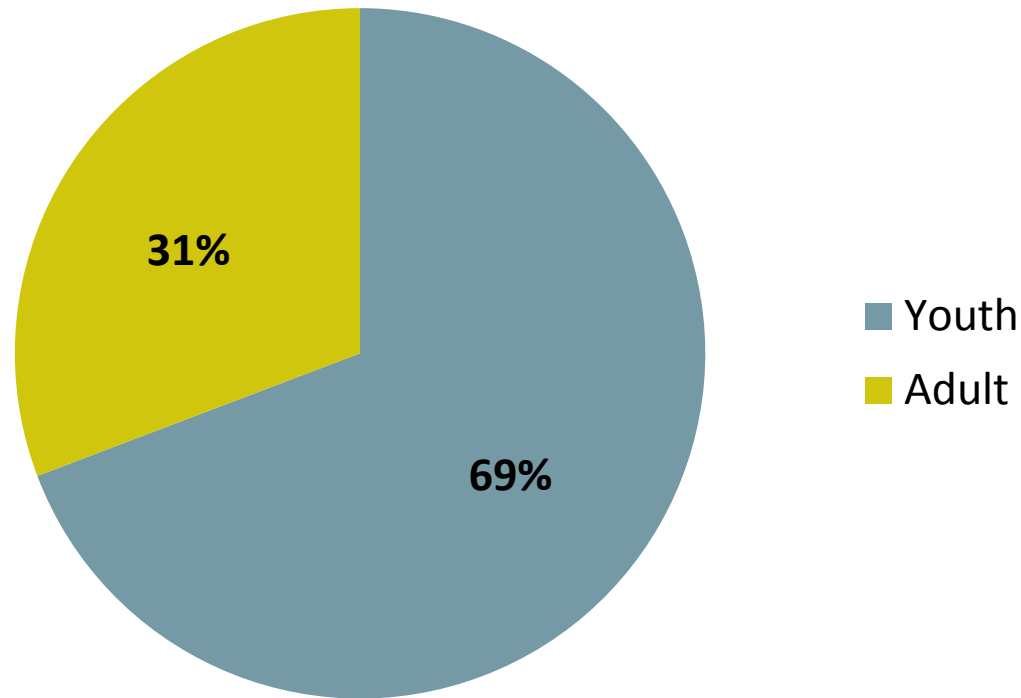
- Key source = MyRec permit data
 - City-owned and managed fields only
- Fields analysis process to date has provided additional quantitative & qualitative data
 - Somerville by Design Green Spaces Community Places, part of Open Space & Recreation Plan process
 - Gale report
 - Fields task force

Data takeaways

1. Vast majority of users are youth & Somerville residents
2. Usage of athletic fields is high & growing
3. The data is nuanced: this is not a simple supply & demand story.
 - a. Our biggest need is for large and medium rectangle fields
 - b. It's all about peak hours

Youth use our fields 2/3 of the time

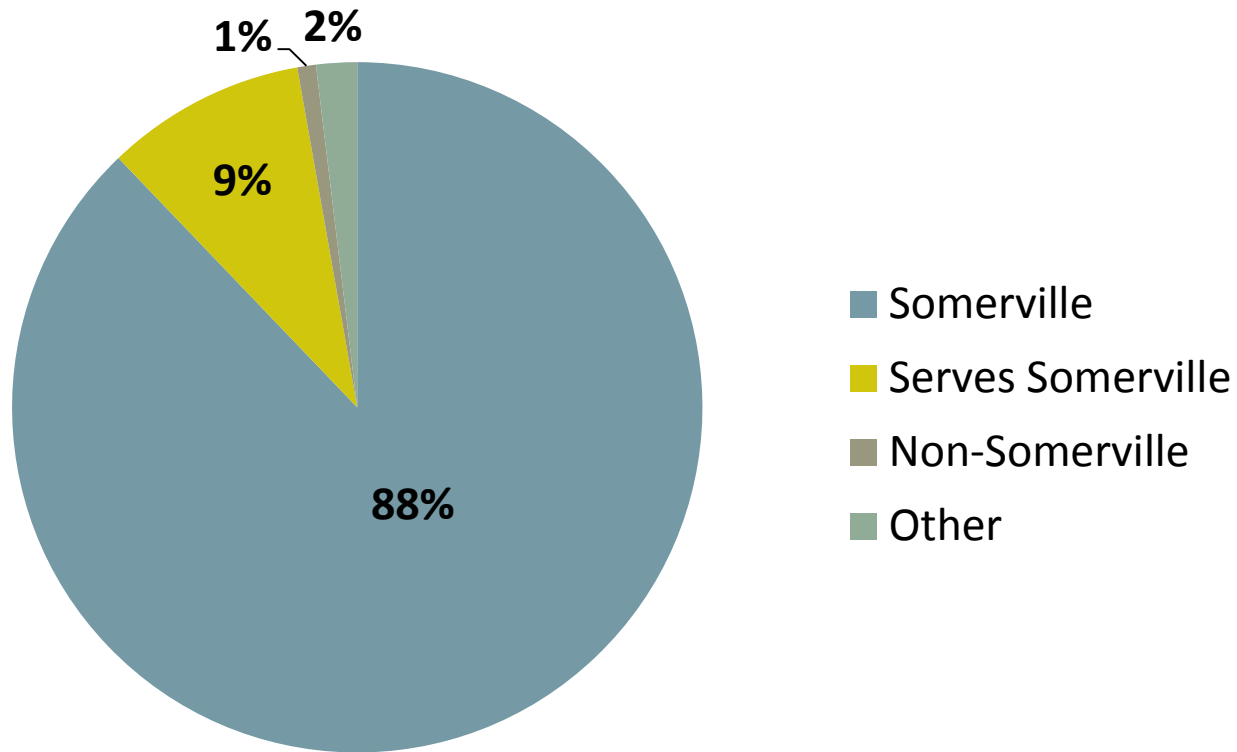
Field usage by age group*



*Excludes Dilboy Stadium; data for City-owned and managed fields only

Somerville residents are on our fields over 90% of the time

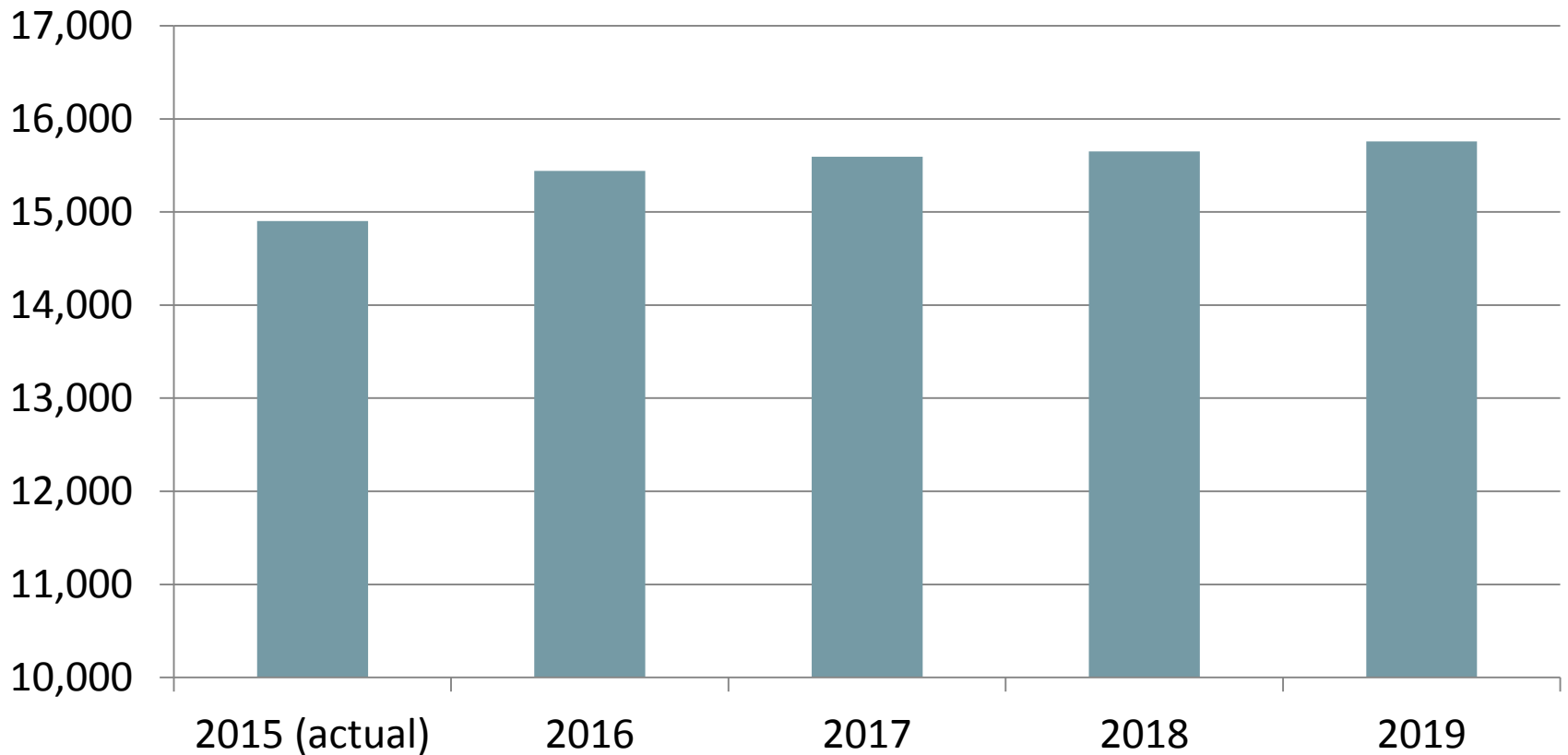
Field usage by organization affiliation*



*Excludes Dilboy Stadium; data for City-owned and managed fields only

Athletic field use is high and growing

Projected Hours of Use*

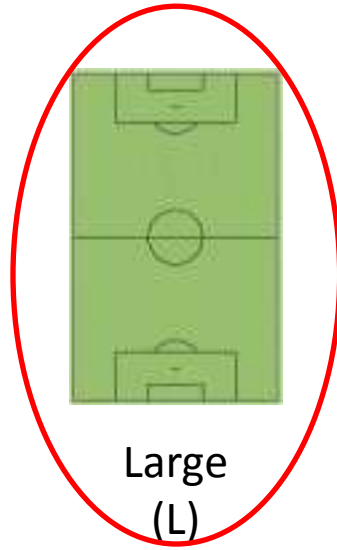


*Includes expanded SYSL hours on Tufts C & J fields and Medford field as well as projected growth in lacrosse program 29

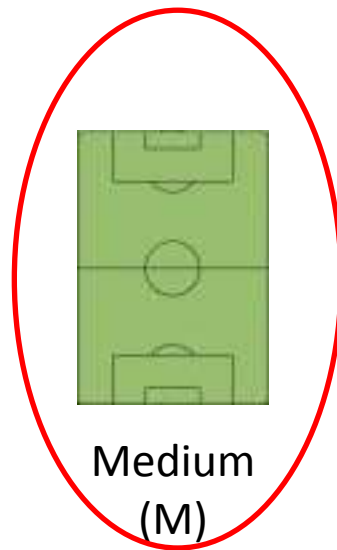
Especially for L & M rectangle fields



Extra Large
(XL)



Large
(L)



Medium
(M)



Small
(S)



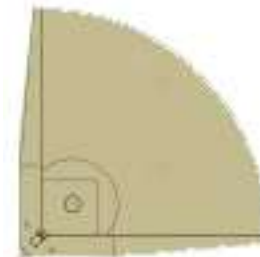
Extra Small
(XS)



Large



Medium



Small

This is not a simple supply & demand analysis in part because different uses require different field sizes. Smaller uses can play on larger fields, but larger uses should not play on smaller fields.

A guide to field sizes

Type	Size			
	CoS Nomenclature	Traditional nomenclature	Min. width x length (yards)	Min. acres
Rectangle	XL	Football field	53.3 x 120	1.32
	L	U14	50 x 100	1.03
	M	U12	45 x 70	0.65
	S	U10	35 x 45	0.33
	XS	U8 or smaller	20 x 25	0.10
Diamond	L	Baseball		
	M	Softball		
	S	Little league		

Inventory of current fields by size

Type	Size	Number	Fields
Rectangle	XL	1	Dilboy Stadium (1, turf)
	L	4*	Dilboy Aux A (1 shared) Lincoln (1, not regulation) Foss (2; 1 shared)
	M	1*	Conway (1 shared)
	S	2	Capuano (1, turf) Nunziato (1)
	XS	1	Triangle (1)
Diamond	L	2*	Foss (1 shared) Trum (1)
	M	4	Foss (2) Lincoln (1) Trum (1)
	S	4*	Conway (2 shared) Dilboy Aux B (1) Hodgkins-Curtin (1)

And during peak hours (M-F, 3-10, Spring & Fall)



Lincoln (M/L rectangle)

Spring

	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
8-8:30						SYSL U8 Games	
8:30-9							
9-9:30							
9:30-10							Sporadic adult uses
10-10:30							
10:30-11							
11-11:30							
11:30-12	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess		
12-12:30							
12:30-1							
1-1:30							
1:30-2							
2-2:30							
2:30-3							
3-3:30							
3:30-4	SHS	SHS	SHS	SHS	SHS		
4-4:30	Ultimate Frisbee A Practice	Ultimate Frisbee A Practice	Ultimate Frisbee A Practice	Ultimate Frisbee A Practice	Ultimate Frisbee A Practice		
4:30-5							
5-5:30							
5:30-6							
6-6:30							
6:30-7							
7-7:30	SYSL U8 Practice	SYSL U8 Practice	SYSL U8 Practice	SYSL U8 Practice	SYSL U8 Practice		
7:30-8							
8-8:30							
8:30-9							
9-9:30							
9:30-10							
10-10:30							
10:30-11							

Fall

	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
8-8:30						SYSL U12 Games	
8:30-9							
9-9:30							
9:30-10							
10-10:30							
10:30-11							
11-11:30							
11:30-12	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess		
12-12:30							
12:30-1							
1-1:30							
1:30-2							
2-2:30							
2:30-3							
3-3:30							
3:30-4	SHS Soccer Practice	SHS Soccer Practice	SHS Soccer Practice	SHS Soccer Practice			
4-4:30							
4:30-5							
5-5:30							
5:30-6							
6-6:30							
6:30-7							
7-7:30	SYSL U12 Practice	SYSL U12 Practice	SYSL U12 Practice	SYSL U12 Practice	SYSL U12 Practice		
7:30-8							
8-8:30							
8:30-9							
9-9:30							
9:30-10							
10-10:30							
10:30-11							

Most uses must be played during a specific time (e.g., SHS practice is between 3:30 & 5:30). Highest demand is during peak hours.

Capuano (S rectangle)

Spring

	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
8-8:30							
8:30-9							
9-9:30							
9:30-10							
10-10:30							
10:30-11							
11-11:30							
11:30-12							
12-12:30							
12:30-1							
1-1:30							
1:30-2							
2-2:30							
2:30-3							
3-3:30							
3:30-4							
4-4:30							
4:30-5							
5-5:30							
5:30-6							
6-6:30							
6:30-7	SYSL U10 Practice	SYSL U10 Practice	SYSL U10 Practice	SYSL U10 Practice	SYSL U10 Practice		
7-7:30							
7:30-8							
8-8:30							
8:30-9							
9-9:30							
9:30-10							

Conway (multipurpose)

Spring

	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
8-8:30							
8:30-9							
9-9:30							
9:30-10							
10-10:30							
10:30-11							
11-11:30							
11:30-12							
12-12:30							
12:30-1							
1-1:30							
1:30-2							
2-2:30							
2:30-3							
3-3:30							
3:30-4							
4-4:30							
4:30-5							
5-5:30	SYLL Practice	SYLL Practice	SYLL Practice	SYLL Practice	SYLL Practice		
5:30-6							
6-6:30							
6:30-7							
7-7:30							
7:30-8							
8-8:30							
8:30-9	WAKA Kickball	Somerville Rec SB	WAKA Kickball	Somerville Rec SB			
9-9:30							
9:30-10							

Dilboyl A (multipurpose)

Spring

	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
8-8:30							
8:30-9							
9-9:30							
9:30-10							
10-10:30							
10:30-11							
11-11:30							
11:30-12							
12-12:30							
12:30-1							
1-1:30							
1:30-2							
2-2:30							
2:30-3							
3-3:30							
3:30-4							
4-4:30	SHS Baseball Practice	SHS Baseball Practice	SHS Baseball Practice	SHS Baseball Practice	SHS Baseball Practice		
4:30-5							
5-5:30							
5:30-6							
6-6:30							
6:30-7	BSSC Softball	BSSC Softball	BSSC Softball	BSSC Softball			
7-7:30							
7:30-8							
8-8:30							
8:30-9							
9-9:30							
9:30-10							

Fall

	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
8-8:30							
8:30-9							
9-9:30							
9:30-10							
10-10:30							
10:30-11							
11-11:30							
11:30-12							
12-12:30							
12:30-1							
1-1:30							
1:30-2							
2-2:30							
2:30-3							
3-3:30							
3:30-4							
4-4:30							
4:30-5							
5-5:30							
5:30-6							
6-6:30							
6:30-7	SYSL U10 Practice	SYSL U10 Practice	SYSL U10 Practice	SYSL U10 Practice	SYSL U10 Practice		
7-7:30							
7:30-8							
8-8:30							
8:30-9							
9-9:30							
9:30-10							

Fall

	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
8-8:30							
8:30-9							
9-9:30							
9:30-10							
10-10:30							
10:30-11							
11-11:30							
11:30-12							
12-12:30							
12:30-1							
1-1:30							
1:30-2							
2-2:30							
2:30-3							
3-3:30							
3:30-4	SHS Football Practice	SHS Football Practice	SHS Football Practice	SHS Football Practice			
4-4:30							
4:30-5							
5-5:30							
5:30-6							
6-6:30	SYSL	SYSL	SYSL	SYSL			
6:30-7							
7-7:30							
7:30-8							
8-8:30							
8:30-9	WAKA Kickball	SBS Soccer	WAKA Kickball	Rampage Football	BUVA Ultimate Frisbee		
9-9:30							
9:30-10							

Fall

	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
8-8:30							
8:30-9							
9-9:30							
9:30-10							
10-10:30							
10:30-11							
11-11:30							
11:30-12							
12-12:30							
12:30-1							
1-1:30							
1:30-2							
2-2:30							
2:30-3							
3-3:30							
3:30-4	SHS Soccer Practice	SHS Soccer Practice	SHS Soccer Practice	SHS Soccer Practice	SHS Soccer Practice		
4-4:30							
4:30-5							
5-5:30							
5:30-6	SYSL/Valeo	SYSL/Valeo	SYSL/Valeo	SYSL/Valeo	SYSL/Valeo		
6-6:30							
6:30-7							
7-7:30							
7:30-8							
8-8:30							
8:30-9							
9-9:30							
9:30-10							

Trum (M & L diamond)

Spring

	Mon		Tues		Weds		Thurs		Fri		Sat		Sun	
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
8-8:30														
8:30-9														
9-9:30														
9:30-10											SHS Baseball	SHS Softball Practice	SHS Baseball	
10-10:30														
10:30-11														
11-11:30														
11:30-12														
12-12:30														
12:30-1														
1-1:30														
1:30-2														
2-2:30														
2:30-3														
3-3:30														
3:30-4	SHS Baseball Practice	SHS Softball Practice	SHS Baseball Practice	SHS Softball Practice	SHS Baseball Practice	SHS Softball Practice	SHS Baseball Practice	SHS Softball Practice	SHS Baseball Practice	SHS Softball Practice				
4-4:30														
4:30-5														
5-5:30														
5:30-6														
6-6:30														
6:30-7														
7-7:30	Babe Ruth	SYSBL	Babe Ruth	SYSBL	Babe Ruth	SYSBL	Babe Ruth	SYSBL	Babe Ruth	SYSBL				
7:30-8														
8-8:30														
8:30-9														
9-9:30		Various adult uses	Lesley University Baseball	Various adult uses	Lesley University Baseball	Various adult uses		Various adult uses		Various adult uses				
9:30-10														
10-10:30														
10:30-11														

Fall

	Mon		Tues		Weds		Thurs		Fri		Sat		Sun	
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
8-8:30														
8:30-9														
9-9:30														
9:30-10														
10-10:30														
10:30-11														
11-11:30														
11:30-12														
12-12:30														
12:30-1														
1-1:30														
1:30-2														
2-2:30								Lesley University Baseball						
2:30-3														
3-3:30														
3:30-4														
4-4:30														
4:30-5														
5-5:30														
5:30-6														
6-6:30														
6:30-7														
7-7:30														
7:30-8														
8-8:30	Various adult uses	Sporadic adult uses	Various adult uses	Sporadic adult uses	Various adult uses	Sporadic adult uses	Various adult uses	Sporadic adult uses	Various adult uses	Sporadic adult uses				
8:30-9														
9-9:30														
9:30-10														
10-10:30														
10:30-11														

Data takeaways

1. Vast majority of users are youth & Somerville residents
2. Usage of athletic fields is high & growing
3. The data is nuanced: this is not a simple supply & demand story.
 - a. Our biggest need is for large and medium rectangle fields
 - b. It's all about peak hours

We currently accommodate this demand by allowing permitting during all available hours



Nunziato



Lincoln



Conway



Dilboy

This has a clear impact on the quality of our fields.

Best practices = better athletic fields

Best practices for natural grass use*:

- 500 hours per year for rectangular sports
- 800 per year for diamond sports

Maintenance is also an important part of this story, and we will address it later in this presentation

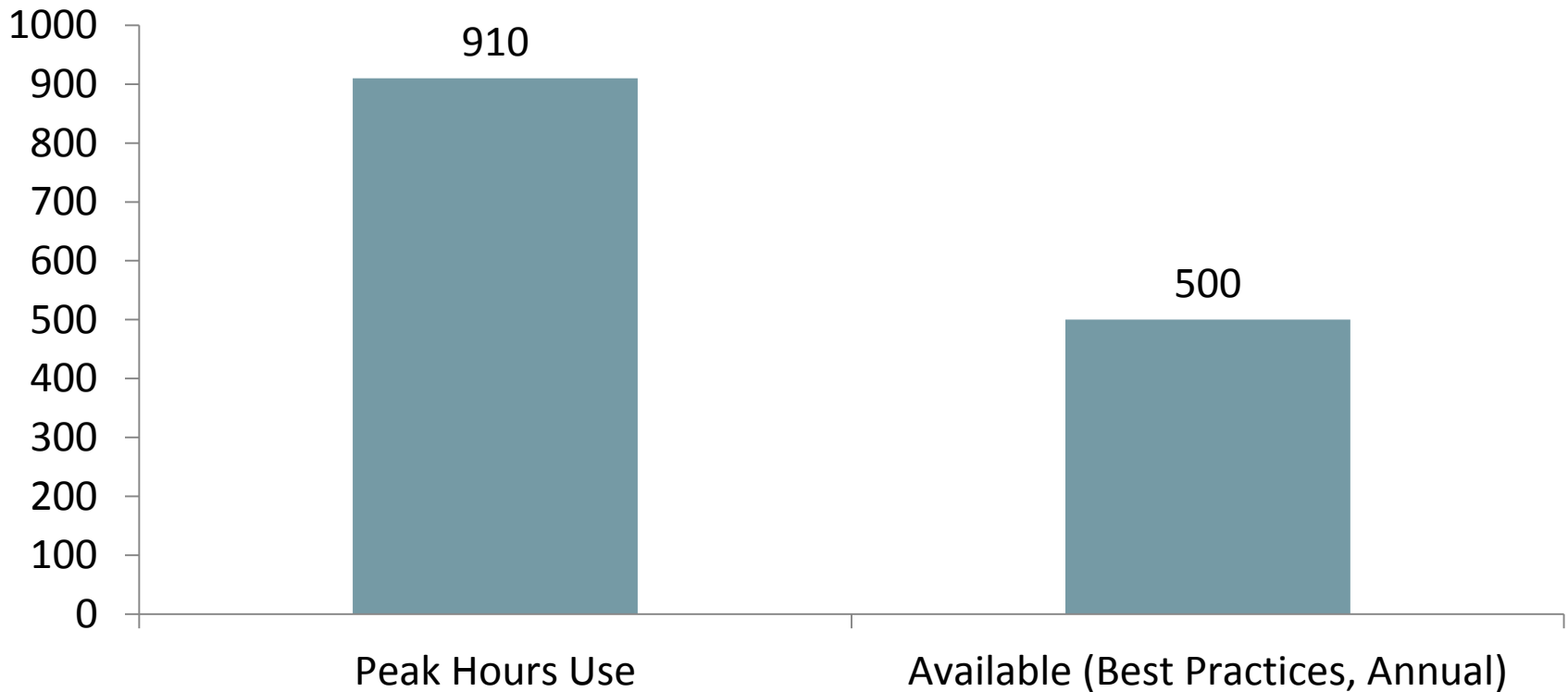
*Sports Turf Management Association, Weston & Sampson, CDM Smith & Gale Associates

New City policy for natural grass fields

When we reconstruct an athletic field with natural grass, we will abide by best practices for hours of use

Adhering to best practices for natural grass

Peak hours v. best-practices hours available on rectangle field



3. Master planning

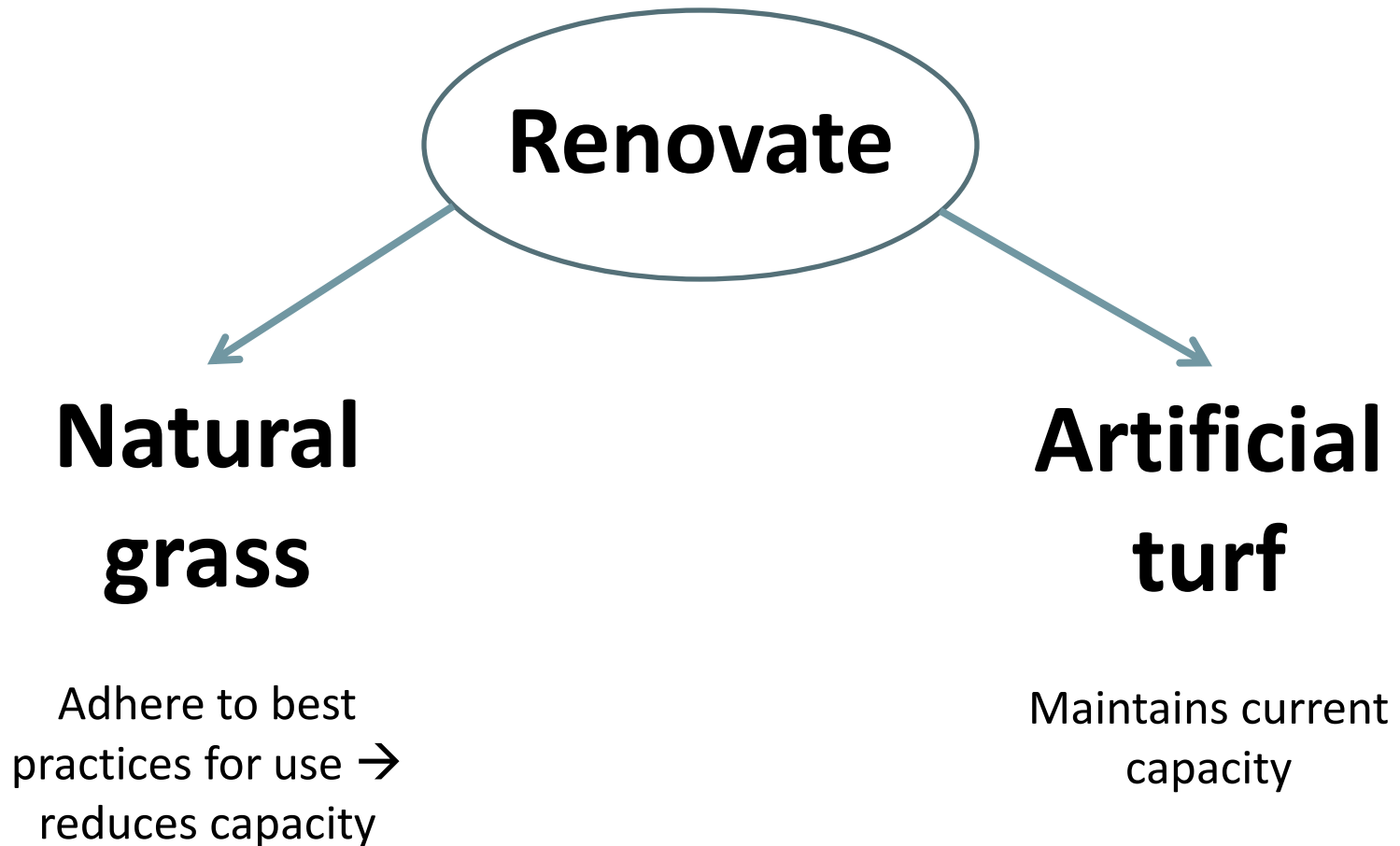
Strategies

1. Renovate existing athletic fields
2. Add new athletic fields
3. Status quo permitting under specific circumstances
4. Potential future option: limit usage

1. Renovate existing fields

- a. To improve quality
- b. To improve efficiency
- c. To add lighting

1a. Improving quality



Both are needed to meet community needs

1b. Improving efficiency

- Dilboy Aux B is currently underutilized as a little league field because the outfield is too small.
- We can improve the efficiency of the field by adding a rectangular field



Dilboy Aux

1c. Adding lighting

- Lights can add up to 600 hours of playing time per field per year
- Fields without lights: Dilboy Aux A & B (not City-owned), Triangle (not City-owned), Hodgkins-Curtin, Draw 7
- But it doesn't always make sense to add lights.

Key fields to renovate

- Criteria:
 - Ownership
 - Current condition
 - Size
 - Other factors (e.g., storm water management project)

Key fields to renovate (not necessarily in priority order)

Field	Ownership	Size	Condition	Other factors
Lincoln	City	M rectangle	Poor	Key stormwater management site
Conway	City	Can fit L multipurpose rectangle	Poor	
Nunziato	City	S rectangle	Poor	Key stormwater management site
Draw 7	DCR	Can fit XL rectangle	Nonexistent	Snow farm permit requires City to bring field back to pre-farm conditions
Dilboy Aux	DCR	A: L multipurpose rectangle; B: can fit M rectangle	Poor	
Foss	DCR	2 L rectangles (1 multipurpose) + M diamond	Poor	

2. Add new athletic fields

- a. City-owned properties
- b. Acquire new parcels
- c. Development areas
- d. Work with community partners for field time

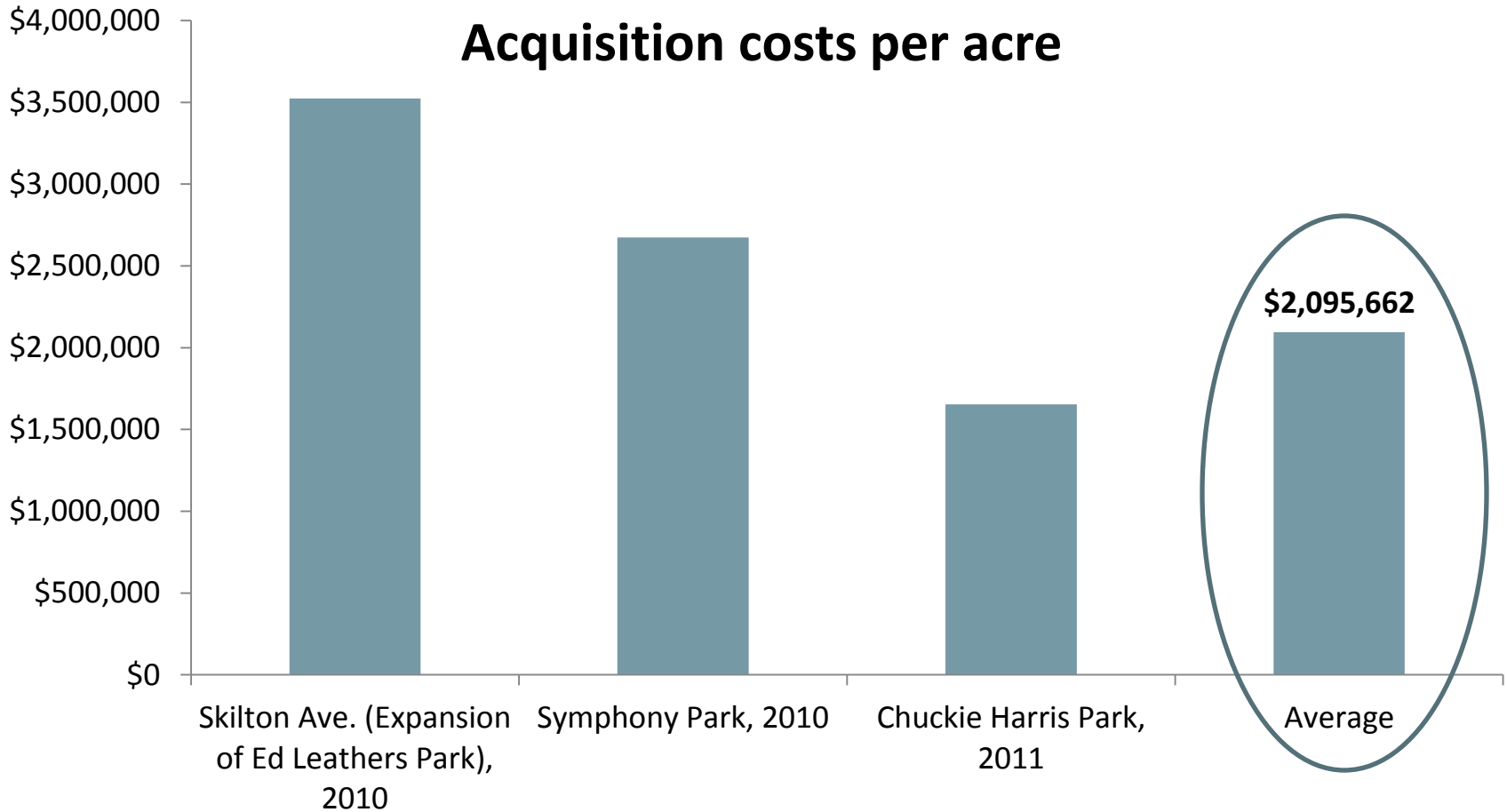
Acres requirements for M & L rectangle fields are substantial

Type	Size			
	CoS Nomenclature	Traditional nomenclature	Min. width x length (yards)	Min. acres
Rectangle	XL	Football field	53.3 x 120	1.32
	L	U14	50 x 100	1.03
	M	U12	45 x 70	0.65
	S	U10	35 x 45	0.33
	XS	U8 or smaller	20 x 25	0.10
Diamond	L	Baseball		
	M	Softball		
	S	Little league		

2a. City-owned parcels

- No open City-owned parcels are large enough to accommodate a M or L rectangle field
- However, we can use smaller parcels (e.g., schoolyards) to build smaller fields that are primarily for community use

2b. Acquire new parcels for fields



Potential acquisition costs

Type	Size		Acquisition estimate
	CoS Nomenclature	Min. acres	
Rectangle	XL	1.32	\$2,771,123
	L	1.03	\$2,164,940
	M	0.65	\$1,363,912
	S	0.33	\$681,956
	XS	0.10	\$216,494
Diamond	L		
	M		
	S		

In addition to high acquisition costs, opportunities for parcels this large are rare.

2c. New development areas

- The draft Union Square Neighborhood Plan calls for the addition of substantial open space that could be used for an athletic field
- The forthcoming zoning reform includes triggers that would require open spaces large enough to accommodate athletic fields (dependent on the size of the development).
- Important caveats:
 - Transformational areas also have to meet other SomerVision goals (jobs, housing, etc.)
 - Development is 5 to 15 years away → this is a long-term strategy

2d. Work with community partners

- The City has already established relationships with Tufts & Medford for field access
 - Tufts: Triangle, C & J during peak hours & on Saturdays
 - Medford: 1 field on Saturdays
- We are currently exploring additional opportunities with community partners

3. Status quo permitting for specific fields

- Fields that are in relatively good condition that we do not intend to overhaul (e.g., Trum, Hodgkins-Curtin)
- Fields in limbo: currently not in good condition but scheduled for improvement
 - We will continue status quo permitting for these fields in the meantime
 - The City's policy is to adhere to best practices for natural grass fields after we renovate them

Putting it all together

- Building the fields master plan is not a simple analytical task: nearly every piece of the puzzle is dependent on every other piece
- The plan presented here establishes a data-based strategy for achieving the City's goals for increasing access to & improving the quality of our fields
- If we change one piece of the puzzle – which is inevitable given that many variables related to the fields are beyond the City's control – there will be ripple effects. The plan must be fluid & responsive to changes.

- This plan accounts for:
 - Field type
 - Field size
 - Scheduling
 - Field ownership
 - Temporary swing space while fields are offline
 - Space for permanently displaced uses
 - Cost considerations

- Implementing the plan will take time.
 - Because of the high level of use on our fields, we can generally only take 1 field offline at a time
 - When we rehab a field as natural grass, we must let the field rest for one year after construction in order to establish a strong root base

- The plan relies heavily on rehabilitating our existing fields.
 - Because of acquisition costs, rehabilitating current assets is more cost effective than acquiring new parcels.
 - It also means we can begin improving our athletic field situation before the transformational neighborhoods come online in 5 to 15 years

- It also introduces artificial turf at several fields
 - Turf provides more playing time per field → more efficient
 - Turf also eliminates the need for field rest after construction → allows us to renovate fields faster
- Some have expressed concern about artificial turf. Fortunately, there are a number of safe and healthy options to choose from.

- It also assumes our efforts to engage community partners continue and that we are able to secure some additional access to non-City fields.

- With the plan outlined here, we can accommodate the majority of current and projected usage for our fields
- There will be less-than-ideal transition periods as we rehabilitate fields
- It does not address every need we have, but it is a concerted step in the right direction

Fields Master Plan Summary: June 2016 Update*

Dilboy Aux

[2a] : stripe S rectangle on B (summer 2016)
[7]: turf A & B; convert B to M rectangle; add lights (pending DCR approval)

Dilboy Stadium

Dilboy Auxillary Fields

Triangle Field

Hodgkins Curtin

Trum

[2b] : Stripe L rectangle for limited use (fall 2016)

Trum Field

Healey School

[6] : Create XS/S turf rectangle; renovate schoolyard (summer 2017)

Winter Hill

[4] : Create XS turf rectangle; renovate schoolyard (fall 2016)

Foss Park

Draw Seven Park

Draw 7

[8] : Ideal: turf XL field & add lights; alternate: interim improvements (pending DCR approval)

Conway

[5] : convert multipurpose M rectangle to turf multipurpose L rectangle (2017 or 2018)

Conway Park

Nunziato Field

Capuano Field

Foss

[9] : Rehabilitate entire park (pending DCR approval)

Nunziato

[3] : stormwater project; rebuild grass field (spring 2017)

Lincoln Park

Lincoln

[1] : renovate park, convert rectangle to regulation M grass field (summer 2016)

***Dates are ideal construction start dates**

Step 1: Lincoln Park renovation

1. Description: rehabilitate entire park, including massive stormwater storage project
 - a. Convert non-regulation L rectangle to M rectangle
 - b. New drainage, irrigation & lighting for rectangle & diamond fields
2. Recommended surface: grass
3. Ideal timeline:
 - a. Construction summer 2016 through fall 2017
 - b. Field rest through summer 2018
 - c. Field online fall 2018
4. Displaced uses: SHS girls soccer, SHS ultimate frisbee, SYSL, SHS softball, SYSBL
5. Requires cooperation from non-City party: no

Step 2a: Dilboy Aux B interim improvements

1. Description: **stripe S rectangle** over field
 - a. Provides swing space for Lincoln construction
2. Recommended surface: n/a
3. Ideal timeline: summer 2016
4. Displaced uses: essentially none due current underutilization of Dilboy B
5. Requires cooperation from non-City party: no

UPDATE: stripe S field; use for practice only

Step 2b: Limited rectangle use at Trum

1. Description: stripe L rectangle at Trum
 - a. Provides swing space for displaced play from Lincoln
2. Recommended surface: n/a
3. Ideal timeline: fall 2016
4. Displaced uses: none
5. Requires cooperation from non-City party: no

UPDATE: rectangular field at Trum

Step 3: Nunziato renovation

1. Description: rehabilitate entire park, including massive stormwater storage project
 - a. Rebuild S grass rectangle with new drainage, irrigation, and lighting
2. Recommended surface: grass
3. Ideal timeline:
 - a. Design summer 2016 through winter 2017
 - b. Construction spring 2017 through spring 2018
 - c. Field rest fall 2018 through spring 2019
 - d. Field online fall 2019
4. Displaced uses: SHS ultimate frisbee, SYSL U8
5. Requires cooperation from non-City party: no

Step 4: Winter Hill XS field

1. Description: construct XS rectangle on lowest level of Winter Hill schoolyard
 - a. Provides swing space for Nunziato construction
 - b. Provides opportunity to rehabilitate Winter Hill schoolyard
2. Recommended surface: turf
3. Ideal timeline:
 - a. Field design summer 2016
 - b. Field construction fall 2016
 - c. Field online spring 2017
 - d. Schoolyard project fall 2016 through end of 2017
4. Displaced uses: none
5. Requires cooperation from non-City party: no

Step 5: Conway renovation

1. Description: convert M multipurpose field to L multipurpose field, including new drainage, irrigation, and lighting
 - a. Maintain 2 S diamonds
 - b. Repair retaining wall
 - c. Remediate potential soil contamination
 - d. Add storm water storage
2. Recommended surface: turf
3. Ideal timeline:
 - a. Begin construction 2017 or 2018
4. Displaced uses: SHS football, SYSL
5. Requires cooperation from non-City party: no

Step 6: Healey School XS/S field

1. Description: construct XS or S rectangle at Healey School
 - a. Provides additional capacity
 - b. Provides opportunity to rehabilitate Healey schoolyard
2. Recommended surface: turf
3. Ideal timeline:
 - a. Design summer 2016 through spring 2017
 - b. Construction summer 2017 through summer 2018
 - c. Field online fall 2018
4. Displaced uses: none
5. Requires cooperation from non-City party: no

Step 7: Dilboy Aux renovation

1. Description: rehabilitate Dilboy Aux A & B with new irrigation, drainage, and lighting
 - a. Permanently convert underutilized S diamond to M rectangle
2. Recommended surface: turf
3. Ideal timeline: fall 2019
4. Displaced uses: SHS soccer, SYSL
5. Requires cooperation from non-City party: yes

UPDATE: On hold pending conversations with DCR

Step 8: Draw 7 renovation

1. Description: renovate entire park, including creation of XL rectangle field with new irrigation, drainage, and lighting
2. Recommended surface: turf
3. Ideal timeline: spring 2020 through fall 2020
4. Displaced uses: none
5. Requires cooperation from non-City party: yes

UPDATE: On hold pending conversations with DCR

Step 9: Foss renovation

1. Description: Rehabilitate entire park with new playing fields, irrigation, drainage, and lighting
2. Recommended surface: To be determined
3. Ideal timeline: To be determined
4. Displaced uses: To be determined
5. Requires cooperation from non-City party:
yes

UPDATE: On hold pending conversations with DCR

4. Field maintenance

- The Administration has submitted an Administrative Order to include fields maintenance under a new department called Parks & Recreation (subject to BOA approval)
- The Administration has included funds for a fields maintenance plan in the FY17 Budget (subject to BOA approval)
- Pending funding, the City will issue a RFP for Maintenance Plan consultant (Summer 2016)

UPDATE: Admin code update

Natural grass maintenance

- When we reconstruct a field as grass, we will adhere to best practices for use and maintenance
- Maintenance assumes proper installation, including drainage, irrigation, soil, and seed
- Maintenance plan to address daily, weekly, monthly, and annual needs

Natural grass maintenance

- Maintenance program must address:
 - Mowing
 - Soil Improvement
 - Compaction Reduction
 - Seeding
 - Irrigation
- Restricted use:
 - No more than 500 hours on rectangle fields
 - No more than 800 hours on diamond fields
 - Restrict use during wet weather & resting periods

Short-term considerations

- Many of our grass fields are located in low-lying areas and have poor soil, drainage, and irrigation
 - No amount of maintenance can make up for this
 - Renovations will address this

Synthetic turf maintenance

- Annual vendor inspection/care plan
 - Advanced Care Visit
 - Deep field de-compaction
 - Magnet sweep for metal debris
 - Rotary brushing to raise fibers/vibrating screen for debris
 - Infill redistributed using weighted power brush & vacuum
 - Vacuum to remove fine dust and debris
 - Standard Care Visit
 - Sweep field for large debris
 - Brush field in multi-directions to redistribute infill
 - Field de-compaction
 - Re-sweep for fine debris

Key next steps

1. Flexible RFQ issued for design services for up to 4 projects (Winter Hill, Nunziato, Conway, Healey)
 - a. Issued 4/20; responses due 5/11
2. BOA request for design funds for Winter Hill & Nunziato (approved May 2016)
3. Incorporate projects into FY17-FY26 CIP
4. Issue RFP for fields maintenance plan
 - a. Funding included in FY17 budget request
5. Continue conversations with DCR re: Draw 7, Dilboy & Foss (ongoing)

Fields Master Plan Summary: June 2016 Update*

Dilbooy Aux

[2a] : stripe S rectangle on B (summer 2016)
[7]: turf A & B; convert B to M rectangle; add lights (pending DCR approval)

Dilbooy Stadium

Dilbooy Auxillary Fields

Triangle Field

Hodgkins Curtin

Trum

[2b] : Stripe L rectangle for limited use (fall 2016)

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Draw 7

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Conway

[5] : convert multipurpose M rectangle to turf multipurpose L rectangle (2017 or 2018)

Conway Park

Nunziato Field

Capuano Field

Foss

[9] : Rehabilitate entire park (pending DCR approval)

Nunziato

[3] : stormwater project; rebuild grass field (spring 2017)

Lincoln Park

Lincoln

[1] : renovate park, convert rectangle to regulation M grass field (summer 2016)

***Dates are ideal construction start dates**

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The following reflect questions asked by community members to City Staff at the community meetings:

FAQs: PERMITTING

1. How do you define user groups that “serve Somerville residents”?

Organizations that target Somerville residents for their programs. (The online application asks if they are residents of Somerville.)

2. Can Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) permitted fields be utilized by Somerville users? If so, is this option included in the field planning?

DCR fields are regional facilities, so they cannot be permitted exclusively for Somerville residents. DCR fields may be used by Somerville users, but they have to go through the DCR permitting process on their website.

3. Does the MyRec database allow users to see all permit requests, rather than just approved permits (to better understand the demand for field time)?

Unfortunately not; it only retains information on approved permits. While the MyRec system is a vast improvement over past practice in the Recreation Department, it has limitations. We will do our best to work with the vendor to better capture permit requests (rather than just granted permits) and cancellations (see #1 under Data below).

4. Where does the money we make on permitting the fields go? I’ve been told it goes to maintenance of the fields. Is that true?

Currently, permit fees go to the City’s general fund, which in turn contributes to the field maintenance expenses.

5. How can we justify permitting lacrosse when we can’t meet the needs of our current athletic programs?

In order to offer the most opportunities for recreation that meets the varied interests and abilities of our youth, the Recreation Department must be responsive to demand for new athletic opportunities. Just as we do our best to accommodate existing sports that are expanding and thus creating new use demands, we do our best to accommodate demand for new sports. The City treats all sports equally.

6. Will Lacrosse be available to all?

Absolutely, just like all of the City’s Recreation programs.

FAQS: DATA

1. Does the City's database capture cancellation rates?

If the City cancels a permit due to field conditions, the permit is removed from the database. If a user cancels a permit and notifies the City, the permit is removed from the database. However, if a user permits a field but does not use the field, this is not reflected in the permit data. We have conservatively corrected for unused field time in the data presented in the master plan. As noted in #3 under Permitting above, while the MyRec program is a vast improvement in data capture over previous methods, it has its limitations. We will work with the MyRec vendor to seek options for capturing data on cancellations.

2. How did you reach the conclusion that primary field types needed are M and L rectangle fields?

City staff went through each permit and noted two items: the field size ideally suited for that use and the field size actually permitted for the use (e.g., high school soccer playing on a Medium (M:U12) field when they should play on a Large (L:U14) field. We then compared the supply of hours for each size field and the demand (although, as noted in FAQ #3 above, demand is not measured perfectly) and found that the largest gap between demand and supply by field size is for M and L rectangle fields.

3. What were the key limitations of the [Gale City of Somerville Athletic Fields Assessment](#)?

The key limitation of the Gale report was that it was done before the City had implemented MyRec, a comprehensive field permitting system for all City-owned and managed fields. As such, Gale Associates had to rely on interview and survey data with frequent users, which is far less reliable than actual permit data.

4. How many hours are grass fields scheduled for presently?

Permitted Hours of Use on City-Owned and Managed Fields	
Conway	1,846
Dilboy Aux A	831
Dilboy Aux B	308
Hodgkins	463
Lincoln rectangle*	1,466
Lincoln diamond	574
Nunziato	752
Tufts Triangle	1,224
Trum	2,094
TOTAL	9,558
*Includes an estimated 390 hours of recess.	

FAQs: LIGHTS

1. What is the benefit of adding lighting at a natural grass field since hours of use are limited by best practices?

Lights do NOT always make sense. In the case where all the best-practice hours have been used before dusk on a natural grass field, there is no benefit to adding lights. This is not always the case, however. For example, if a field is only used in the spring and fall during the week beginning at 5:30, lights can significantly extend peak-time playing hours while staying below maximum best-practice available hours.

2. Why are we putting lights at Lincoln (if there will be so few athletic uses after recess hours?)

Because the remaining hours will likely be permitted to accommodate youth games and practices, which often go beyond dusk.

3. If lights are added to fields, will organizations (specifically youth organizations) be charged by the hour for use of lights?

Presently, Somerville Youth are charged \$55 per week. Others are charged \$55 per use.

FAQs: THE PLAN

1. Many City fields are focal points for their neighborhoods. How will the local communities be engaged in reconstructing plans for “their” fields?

All fields projects, like park projects, have a public process in which the neighborhood and all members of the Somerville community are invited to participate. In the case of athletic fields, it is important to remember that they serve a citywide, not just a neighborhood, need. Providing athletic recreation for Somerville youth and adults is an important citywide goal that 1) can only be accommodated on athletic fields and 2) leads to healthier residents in all neighborhoods.

2. Are you planning on hazmat testing at Draw 7? The snow farm brought oil, particulate matter, and grunge from streets.

As we do in all parks projects, we will work with DCR (the owners of the land) and follow all local, state, and federal requirements for completing any project at Draw 7 Park.

3. Nunziato is a much smaller field than Lincoln. Both require storm water systems. Why is Nunziato taken offline for 4 seasons while Lincoln is only 3?

First, we have revised the time estimates included in the original “Fields Planning” presentation: Nunziato will be offline for 5 growing seasons, and Lincoln will be offline for 4 playing seasons. To explain the difference: while Nunziato is a smaller open space than Lincoln, the sub-surface storm water project for Nunziato field is larger and far more complex than the project at Lincoln. The Nunziato stormwater project will take a full calendar year to construct (2017) and the field itself will take one season to construct (spring 2018); the natural grass field must then rest for two growing seasons (fall 2018 & spring 2019). The construction to rehabilitate Lincoln Park, including the storm water system, will take approximately one year (through end of summer 2017); however, the contractor intends to finish the natural grass fields by early spring 2017, allowing them to rest during the spring and fall of 2017.

FAQ's: THE PLAN (continued)

4. Where will Conway uses go when Conway is taken offline?

This is in flux, but the most recent thinking about how to accommodate Conway uses when Conway is taken offline include:

- Somerville Youth Little League to Foss (permitting through DCR)
- SHS football to Draw 7 (permitting through DCR)
- Junior Rampage to share Dilboy Aux A/B with Somerville Youth Soccer League

5. Will any of our fields be renovated this year? (It's not that difficult to: 1) repair irrigation 2) aerate fields 3) seed fields 4) give top dressing of compost, is it?)

We are planning for interim improvements at Dilboy Aux B in the summer of 2016. It is important to note, however, that the construction of a field is more complicated than it might seem. In addition to securing permission from the managing agency (if it is a DCR Field), the public process, the time required for public bid of the design and construction, there are subsurface considerations (soils, irrigation and utility lines), as well as grading and drainage strategies that need to be considered to assure the construction of successful fields (natural or artificial).

6. What are the next steps for this plan?

After doing more research and responding to issues that have arisen in the past few months, City staff has revised the Fields Master Planning document and posted it online. Next steps include:

- A. Incorporating all proposed rehabilitation projects into the City's next 10-year Capital Investment Plan.
- B. Establishing a new, updated maintenance plan for the City's natural grass fields.
- C. Installing an artificial turf field at the Winter Hill Innovation School yard to be ready in the spring of 2017 (and as part of a larger schoolyard project).
- D. Procuring design services for the rehabilitation of Nunziato (natural grass) and Conway fields (artificial turf).
- E. Continuing to work with DCR to advance improvements at Draw 7, Dilboy, and Foss Park.
- F. Continuing to work with our community partners (e.g., Tufts, Bunker Hill Community College) to gain additional access to non-City fields.

FAQs: MAINTENANCE & BEST PRACTICES

1. Where do the “Best Practice Usage Numbers” for natural turf grass fields come from?

First, and most importantly, the numbers (500 hours/year for rectangular fields and 800 hours/year for diamond fields in **public, urban areas**) are a **baseline** for use and must be reevaluated every year based on the condition of every field. While there is some flexibility with these numbers, it is vital to note two things:

1) Much of the data with higher usage rates on natural turf grass comes from “high performance athletic fields*” located in private or restricted athletic field compounds (not public, urban parks). These are private sports complexes with unlimited resources for a high maintenance regime and a committed access, usage, rest and rotation policy that would not accommodate Somerville needs and uses. These studies are NOT applicable to Somerville’s public, urban fields, and while they inform our field planning, they should not be what our usage hours are based on.

2) Natural turf grass is a plant and it simply cannot withstand unlimited hours of use or use after inclement weather. It needs to rest and its roots must be given time to restore. Aside from rest periods, natural field success depends on the soil quality and the subsurface conditions, as well as maintenance.

The 500/800 numbers come from a variety of sources:

1) The June 2013 Gale Athletic Fields Assessment & Master Plan commissioned by the City estimates that “based on original field construction and current maintenance practice...each natural turf field is capable of experiencing no more than 250 team uses per year without detrimental break down of the turf.” They define a team use as “10-20 persons using the field for a 1-2 hour event.” The event number translated to maximum time equals 500 hours.

2) During the community planning process for Lincoln Park, the design consultants, Weston & Sampson, whose office is multi-disciplinary and has extensive experience creating athletic field master plans and site specific master plans in New England cities, recommended 500 hours for rectangular fields and 800 for diamond fields in a public, urban context. These numbers are based on SportsTurf Managers Association (STMA)** recommendations as well as Weston & Sampson’s documented levels of use and conditions at fields throughout New England. Based on their experience and that of local turf grass managers, they have observed that fields used less than 600 hours a year and proper maintenance tend to be in good shape, but that their condition deteriorates as hours of use increase.

3) In addition to vetting these numbers with neighboring municipalities, staff consulted numerous applicable academic reports, and spoke to a number of natural turfgrass experts working on public, urban fields in New England. We are confident that the 500/800 numbers are a solid baseline for natural grass hours. These baseline hours should be adjusted to respond to field conditions as our Maintenance Plan develops.

*High Performance Athletic Fields are built with specific subsurface requirements. They are not what is typically found in urban parks. Lincoln Park Field will be Somerville’s first “High Performance Athletic Field. Unfortunately, many of our present athletic fields are located on sites with no subsurface and very bad drainage.

** STMA is a professional association whose members manage both natural and synthetic turfgrass athletic fields.

FAQs: MAINTENANCE & BEST PRACTICES (continued)

2. Does the City plan to use the stormwater we store for irrigation for grass, trees, plantings, etc.?

Where appropriate, yes. Lincoln Park has been designed for this practice. Other parks, Symphony Park and Chuckie Harris Park, have incorporated innovative stormwater capture and reuse methods. Still, it is important to recognize that there are many factors that go into this decision, such as the porosity of the soil below, the proximity of the water table, and the feasibility of retrofitting a system like this at existing parks and fields. Whenever a park is built or rehabilitated, we evaluate the opportunities for stormwater mitigation and reuse strategies.

3. What chemicals will be needed to clean an 'organic athletic field'?

The City is interested in exploring options for organic field maintenance, and as the Field Maintenance Plan is developed, options in this area will be fully reviewed.

4. Will the City consider not using petro chemicals?

The City is interested in exploring alternatives to petrochemicals, and as the Field Maintenance Plan is developed, options in this area will be fully reviewed.

5. Will the City consider grazing instead of mowing?

We have investigated grazing with animals as a mowing practice and existing evidence clearly indicates that it is not appropriate for athletic fields. While some cities have used animals for grassy areas with unique characteristics (for example, goats to eat invasive species in difficult to access areas or steep slopes), introducing animal waste into areas for human athletic use is not consistent with best public health practices. Additionally, athletic fields grass must be mown to specific heights at different times and grass height is not possible to control with grazing animals.

6. Why do fields need irrigation? Grasslands exist all over the world with very little rainfall.

A "grassland" is a naturally occurring landscape where grasses, sedges and rushes dominate the vegetation. An athletic natural turfgrass field has very little in common with a grassland landscape. The most common grasses suitable for natural grass athletic fields are not native to the United States and they require consistent watering, especially in the heat of the summer.

7. Have we looked at farming practices and how they apply to athletic fields?

Yes, and while some farming practices may be appropriate to natural grass athletic fields in public, urban parks, many are not. Still, it is important to remember that the idea behind looking to farming practices is to find more sustainable, chemical-free practices. We will investigate sustainable, chemical-free maintenance practices as part of the Fields Maintenance Plan.

FAQs: OPEN ACCESS TO FIELDS

1. Can we open Dilboy Stadium permanently? Why is it locked? Is it to protect the field?

Dilboy is a Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR) owned stadium facility that the City manages under a license agreement with the State. It, therefore, requires strict oversight and responsible management to ensure all components of the stadium, including the field, remain in of the best condition possible. This requires the facility to be staffed when open and to be secured at all other times. During the summer, the track is open to the public for walking and running from 7 to 9 am.

2. Some city fields are not accessible (locked and gated) during non-permitted time. Is improving casual use and access a goal for the fields plan?

Only two fields are locked and gated today (Conway Field and Dilboy Stadium). Of course, we would like all public parks to be enjoyed by as many residents as possible. Controlled access has only been implemented in cases where having open access destroys the playing surface and thereby eliminates athletic uses, such as at Conway Field or when, as in Dilboy Stadium, it is a State asset .

3. Do we need to be scheduling our athletic fields all day every day? Can't we keep them for informal community use?

There are many opportunities to use our athletic fields for informal use when they are not permitted. An example is the downtime for league sports in between seasons. Additionally, numerous informal uses take place in our parks in areas that are not athletic fields. Because the demand for the athletic fields in our densely populated city far exceeds the supply, we must permit the fields intensively.

OTHER FAQS

1. Our fields serve very important environmental functions, such as carbon sequestration. Why do these decisions need to be about sports?

While it is true that natural grass fields have some environmental benefits, organized sports can only occur on athletic fields. Because of this, we must balance the desire for natural, unprogrammed fields, with the demand for athletic fields that allow youth and adults to play sports, which is also important to a community's health.

2. Why can't we seriously limit our permitted hours to prioritize Somervillains?

The overwhelming majority of uses of our fields are for Somerville Schools sports and Somerville youth leagues. Limiting permitted athletic hours on athletic fields is an option, but these youth, and our adults, would be affected by this decision as they would have fewer time slots to select from to book their games. Limiting athletic use means that youth and adults cannot exercise. With an epidemic of youth obesity in the United States and with more than two-thirds of adults obese or overweight, this goes against the tenants of creating a healthy city. It is important to also note that leagues not based in Somerville do in fact serve a great number of our residents. For example, Boston Social Sports has more than 4,000 members that are Somerville residents despite the league's otherwise regional membership and "Boston" name. The Somerville members of regional leagues are welcomed for team play in our neighbor cities, and in the interest of public health and fairness, they will remain welcome in their own city as well.

The end.