



PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

Meeting: April 8, 2021

Subject

Updated Athletic Field Use Policy

Recommended Action

Recommend that Council approve the updated Athletic Field Use Policy and provide any input

Background

The current City of Cupertino Athletic Field Use Policy (Attachment E) was established to ensure that all City-managed fields are utilized for recreational, athletic, cultural, educational, social, and community service functions in a manner that preserves neighborhood quality of life and protects the park resource. The existing policy was approved in 2004. The policy requires field use permits for exclusive field use or for any repeated, organized use of athletic fields maintained by the City of Cupertino. A study of the current Athletic Field Use Policy became a City Work Program item in Fiscal Year 2019-2020 with the objective of assessing the current Athletic Field Use Policy including a review of scheduling, the fee schedule, cost recovery, and Sunday reservation feasibility. The Parks and Recreation System Master Plan adopted in February 2020 indicates the need to evaluate and implement changes to field scheduling to increase capacity and usage.

Fields at the following sites are governed by the Athletic Field Use Policy:

- Creekside Park
- Collins Elementary
- Eaton Elementary
- Faria Elementary
- Garden Gate Elementary
- Hoover Park
- Hyde Middle School
- Jollyman Park
- Kennedy Middle School
- Library Field
- Lincoln Elementary
- Monta Vista Park
- Regnart Elementary
- Stevens Creek Elementary
- Wilson Park

Discussion

After reviewing field use policies in neighboring cities and conducting community outreach, the updated proposed policy includes an option to allow for additional

Sunday field reservations, a transition to an hourly fee structure, and provisions to allow for necessary field closures. Currently, Sunday field reservations are limited to two Sunday tournaments per year per sports group and for groups serving individuals with a disability. Additional Sunday field use may require annual field closures to rest the fields and allow for any maintenance.

Other minor changes in the policy include incorporating existing guidelines for storing equipment and goals, simplified group prioritization, insurance requirements, and the requirement for following State and Federal Guidelines regarding mandated reporting, fingerprinting, and concussion protocols. These items are already part of the current permitting process but are being included in the proposed policy for consistency (Attachment A).

Outreach

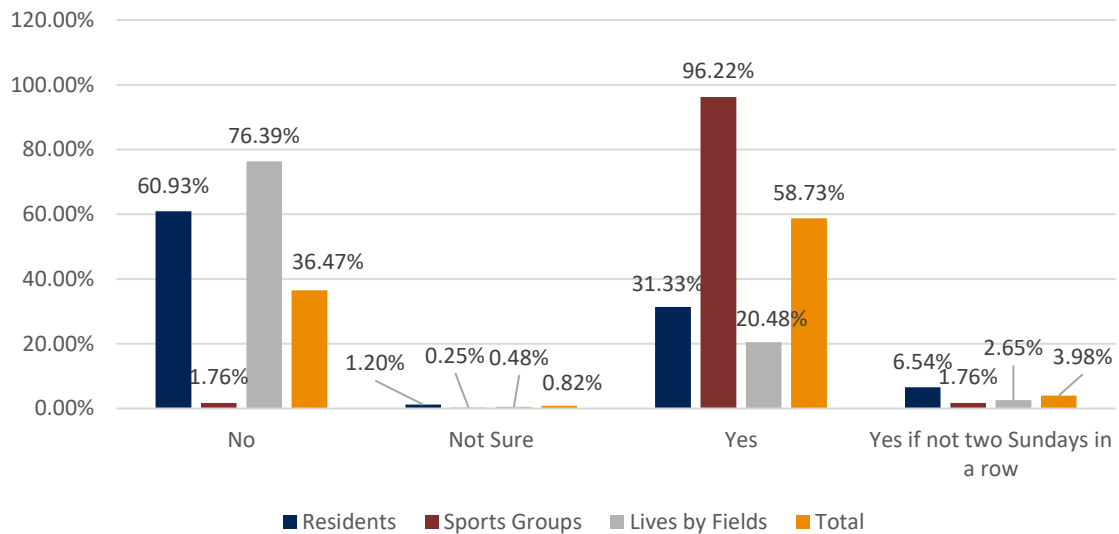
Outreach to the community included a dedicated webpage, a citywide postcard, social media posts, an online survey (February 21 – March 21), and an online community meeting on March 9. Staff also met with all youth sports organizations that currently use the fields, collecting feedback about Sunday use, annual field closures, and the change in fees.

The survey was completed by a total of 979 people, including 581 self-identified residents (59%). 397 respondents (41%) indicated that someone in their household participates in a sports group that uses Cupertino fields, including 60 self-identified residents. 415 (42%) respondents said they lived by one of the fields in the Athletic Field Use Policy, including 378 self-identified residents (Attachment B).

Survey results were analyzed in the following groupings and are shown in the following charts:

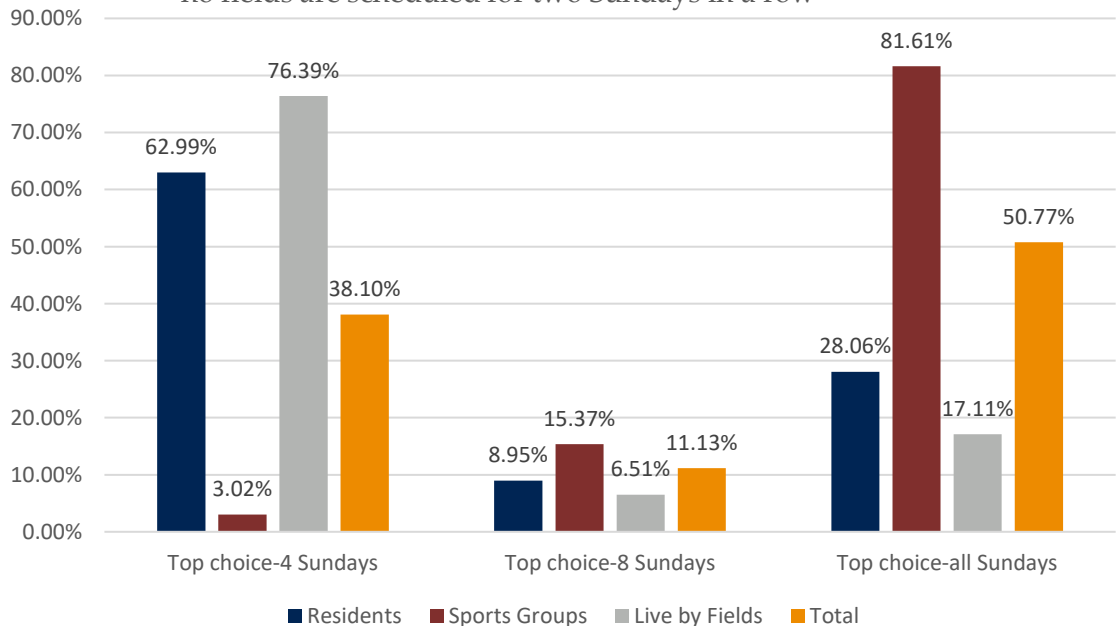
- Residents
- Respondents where someone in the household participates in a sports group that uses Cupertino fields (Sports Groups)
- Respondents that live by a field in the Athletic Field Use Policy (Lives by Fields)
- All respondents (Total)

Currently, youth sports groups are the primary users of City-managed fields and have requested additional Sunday field use for general practice and games. Would you support allowing sports groups to use fields on Sundays for these purposes?

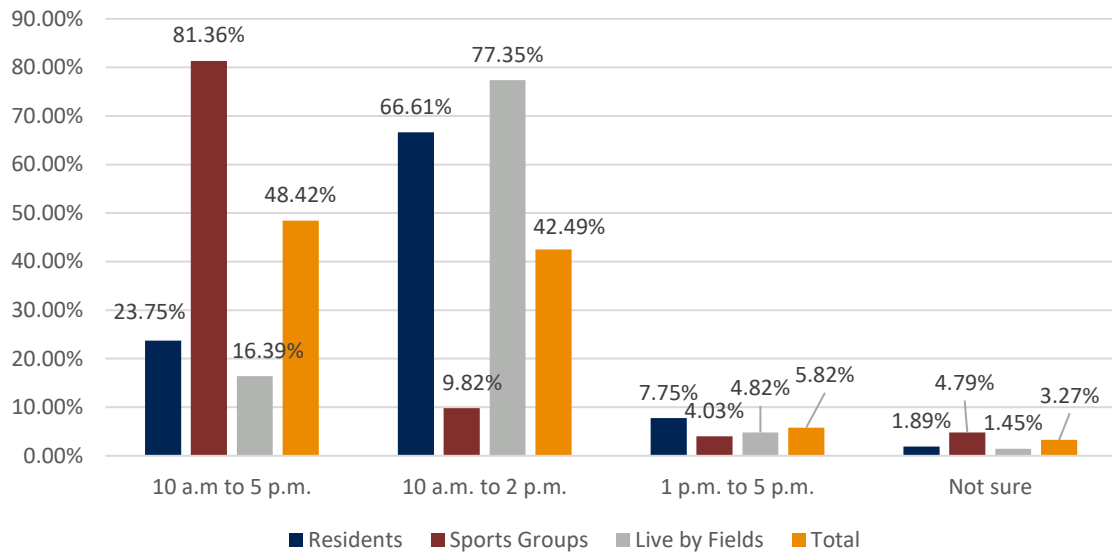


If Sunday use is expanded to allow general practice and games, please rank the following options in order of preference.

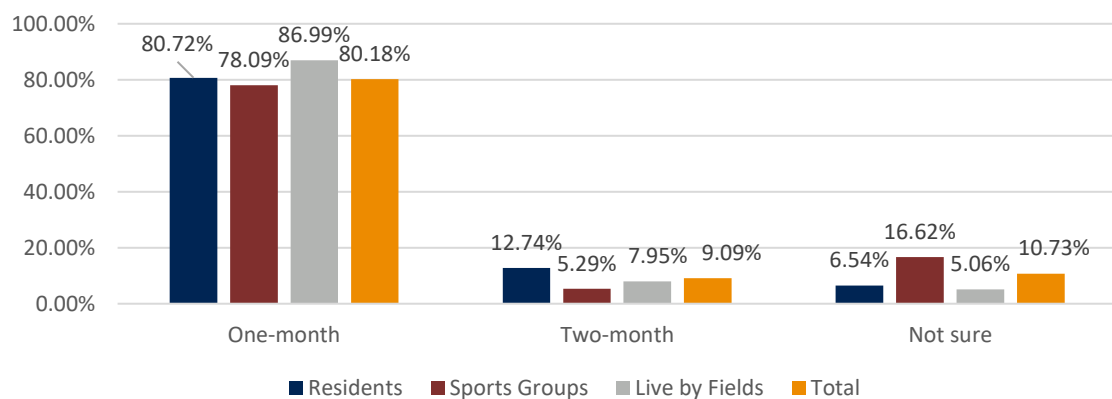
- Allow each sports group to use a field four (4) Sundays a year
- Allow each sports group to use a field eight (8) Sundays a year
- Allow sports groups to use fields on all Sundays, provided that no fields are scheduled for two Sundays in a row



If sports groups are allowed to use fields on Sundays for general practice and games, which time frame would you prefer this use to be allowed?



An annual field closure is being proposed to rest fields and conduct maintenance. Fields would be closed to sports groups and the public during this closure and would most likely take place during December and/or January. Which would you prefer?



Overall, residents and those living near the fields did not want additional Sunday field use while sports groups did. If sports groups were allowed additional Sunday field use, residents and those living near fields preferred only adding four Sundays per group per year from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sports groups preferred adding all Sundays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Across all respondents, only one month of field closure was preferred.

The survey also allowed respondents to provide comments. Of the 238 comments received, 17% supported Sunday field use and 17% did not. 27% of the comments indicated general support for field use but did not specify Sundays. 17% of the comments indicated that fields should only be closed due to poor conditions and weather.

Additional Sunday Field Use

A review of field use policies in neighboring cities included Campbell, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San Jose, Santa Clara, Saratoga, and Sunnyvale (Attachment C). All cities reviewed allow permitted field use on all Sundays.

Cupertino's current limitations on Sunday field use allow Sundays to be used to rest the fields and allow residents to use the fields freely. At prior City Council meetings, youth sports groups have advocated for expanding Sunday use. Expanding Sunday field use would let youth sports teams to schedule games, make-up games, and practices. It would also allow groups who do not hold tournaments to hold games on Sundays.

Based on the results of the survey, it is recommended that the City do one of the following:

1. Do not expand Sunday field use; or
2. Allow each group to reserve fields on 4 Sundays a year from 10 a.m.-2p.m.

In either option, it is recommended that sports groups continue to be allowed to host two tournaments a year, consistent with current practice.

Fee Structure

After reviewing the fee structures for Campbell, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San Jose, Santa Clara, Saratoga, and Sunnyvale (Attachment D), staff found they all use an hourly fee. To better align with neighboring cities, it is recommended that Cupertino shift from the current per player fee structure to an hourly fee structure. This would improve cost recovery as well as encourage field reservations to be made more efficiently. The per player fee structure results in an estimated 7% cost recovery. Implementing an hourly fee structure will result in higher fees for sports groups. To ease in this increase, it is recommended that the fees start lower at an estimated 25% cost recovery and gradually increase annually until 40% cost recovery is achieved. However, if desired the City could implement 40% cost recovery fees as soon as next year.

All sports groups were made aware of the potential change to an hourly fee structure in February 2020. Groups generally understood the need to increase fees. Some expressed a need for sufficient time to adjust their rates to account for the increase.

Options for Field Use Hourly Fees

Proposed Fee categories	Average Cost in Neighboring Cities	25% Cost Recovery (recommended)	40% Cost Recovery
City of Cupertino at any field/CUSD programs at JUA fields	No charge	No charge	No charge
Non-profit organizations serving individuals with a disability	N/A*	No charge	No charge
Resident ($\geq 51\%$), nonprofit youth organizations	\$30/hour/field	\$20/hour/field	\$30/hour/field
Non-resident, nonprofit youth organizations	\$78/hour/field	\$30/hour/field	\$50/hour/field
Resident adult ($\geq 51\%$) or for-profit youth organizations	\$49/hour/field	\$50/hour/field	\$60/hour/field
Non-resident adult or for-profit youth organizations	\$85/hour/field	\$60/hour/field	\$80/hour/field

*Other cities do not have a category for organizations serving individuals with a disability. Cupertino has historically assigned special priority status to groups providing a unique recreational experience for individuals with a disability, free of charge.

Estimated Impact on Current Sports Groups

Sports Groups	Fee Category	FY 18/19 Total Fees Paid	Estimated 25% Cost Recovery Fees (recommended)	Estimated 40% Cost Recovery Fees
Resident Groups ($\geq 51\%$)				
AYSO-35	Resident Non-Profit Youth	\$8,008.00	\$22,440.00	\$44,880.00
California Cricket Academy	Resident Non-Profit Youth	\$1,177.00	\$15,520.00	\$31,040.00
Cupertino Little League	Resident Non-Profit Youth	\$3,278.00	\$31,820.00	\$63,640.00
Cupertino Football Club	Resident Non-Profit Youth	\$6,501.00	\$22,300.00	\$44,600.00
Golden Triangle Soccer	Resident Non-Profit Youth	\$506.00	\$8,800.00	\$17,600.00
U.S. Youth Volleyball League	Resident Non-Profit Youth	\$2,794.00	\$1,600.00	\$2,400.00
Non-resident Groups				
AYSO-64	Non-resident Non-Profit Youth	\$3,520.00	\$11,580.00	\$19,300.00
Cupertino Girls Softball	Non-resident Non-Profit Youth	\$1,529.00	\$22,800.00	\$38,000.00
De Anza Youth Soccer	Non-resident Non-Profit Youth	\$110,616.00	\$231,600.00	\$386,000.00
Golden Triangle Soccer	Resident Non-Profit Youth	\$506.00	\$8,800.00	\$17,600.00
Total		\$137,929.00	\$368,460.00	\$647,460.00

Annual Field Closure Period

The cities of Campbell, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Mountain View, Palo Alto, Saratoga, and Sunnyvale all have annual winter field closures to rest the fields and conduct maintenance. The length of the closures varies from two months to three and half months. The cities of San Jose and Santa Clara do not have regularly scheduled closures.

According to the survey, respondents preferred a shorter closure. In addition, it is unknown whether the fields will require a resting period and it would depend on how heavily they are used under the new hourly rental structure. With these considerations, it is recommended that fields be closed only on an as-needed basis, to be determined by Public Works as they maintain the fields. This will avoid any unnecessary closure of fields. Any planned field closures will be posted on the City website and sports groups will be notified.

Sustainability Impact

No sustainability impacts.

Fiscal Impact

In Fiscal Year 2018-2019, field revenue was \$139,589. Fall 2019 revenue was \$62,726 with no play allowed in the Spring of 2020 due to COVID-19. Participation was limited due to COVID-19 restrictions in Fall 2020 resulting in revenue of \$46,013. It costs an estimated \$1,874,539 to maintain and operate the fields annually.

Based on current group usage during a non-pandemic year, revenue with the recommended 25% cost recovery hourly fee structure is estimated to be \$368,460. The 40% cost recovery hourly fee structure is estimated to result in \$647,460 in revenue. However, an hourly fee structure would allow for more efficient scheduling of the fields. If more efficient scheduling results in additional hours reserved, it is estimated that field reservations could generate revenues up to \$468,635 under the 25% cost recovery model and up to \$749,816 under the 40% cost recovery model. Cost recovery models are estimated based on information available and will be revisited annually for adjustments if needed.

Prepared by: Karen Levy, Recreation Coordinator

Reviewed by: Jenny Koverman, Recreation Supervisor

Katy Nomura, Assistant to the City Manager

Approved for Submission by: Joanne Magrini, Director of Parks and Recreation

Attachments:

- A – Proposed City of Cupertino Athletic Field Use Policy
- B – Sunday Field Use and Annual Field Closure Survey Results
- C – Comparison of Other Cities
- D – Fee Comparison and Cost Recovery Chart
- E – Current City of Cupertino Athletic Field Use Policy