



PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

Meeting: May 4, 2021

Subject

Consider approving the updated Athletic Field Use Policy (Continued from April 20. Public Comment period is closed)

Recommended Action

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, 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). Group prioritization was also simplified for efficiency but remains consistent with current practice.

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.

Youth Sport Organization Feedback

Several meetings have been held with the youth sports organizations since February 2020. Groups were informed about the potential change to an hourly fee structure and a proposed youth resident group fee of \$20/hour/field. In fall 2020, groups also provided their feedback about their preferred Sunday use as shown in the following table.

Youth Sport Organization Sunday Field Use Feedback

	Currently Allowed	Additional Sunday Use Requested		
	Actual Sunday Use	Requested Practices	Requested Games	Additional Requested Tournaments
Resident Groups (≥ 51%)				
American Youth Soccer - 35	2 tournaments	0	4 Make-Up	2
California Cricket Academy	2 tournaments	0	All	0
Cupertino Football Club (Soccer)	2 tournaments	0	0	2
Cupertino Little League	0	0	4-6	0
Golden Triangle Soccer	0	All	All	0
US Youth Volleyball League	0	0	3-6 Make-Up	0
Non-resident Groups				
American Youth Soccer - 64	2 tournaments	0	0	0

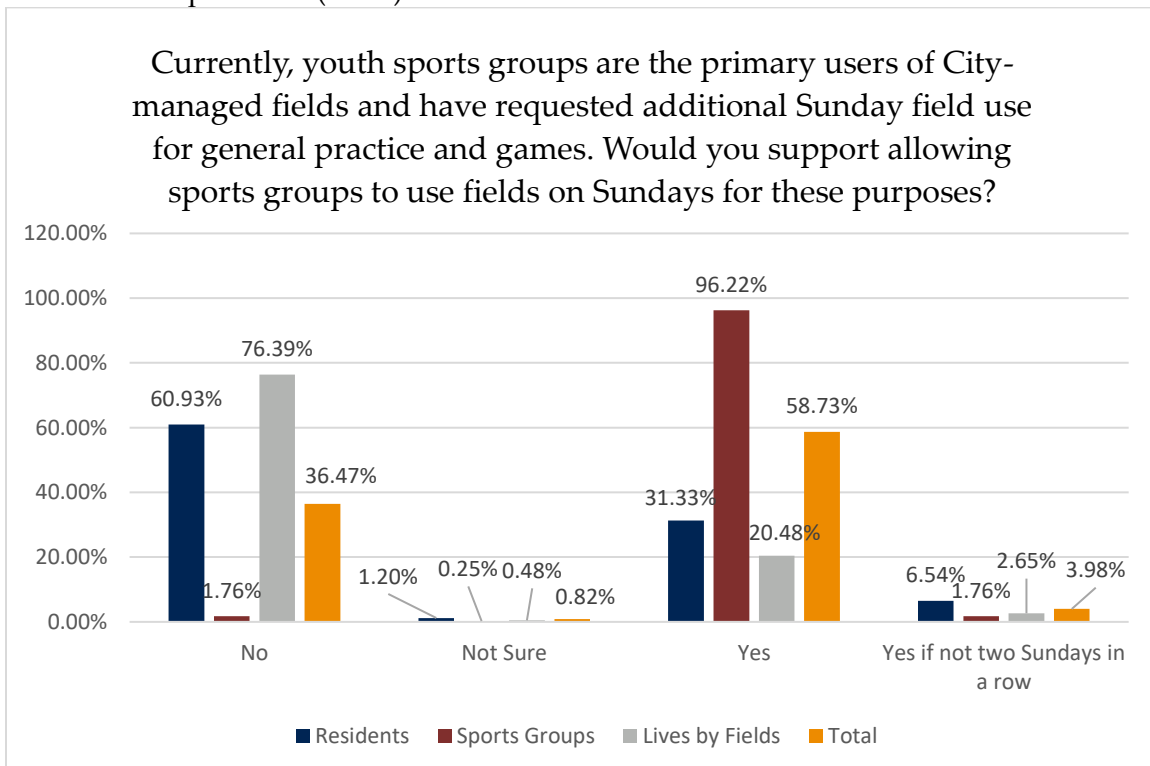
De Anza Youth Soccer	2 tournaments	0	20	0
Cupertino Girls Softball	1 tournament	0	7	0
Groups primarily serving individuals with disabilities				
Little League Challenger	4-6 half-day games	The current policy allows groups primarily serving individuals with disabilities to use fields on Sundays. This practice is continued in the proposed updated policy.		
South Bay VIP	20 half-day games			

Survey Results

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).

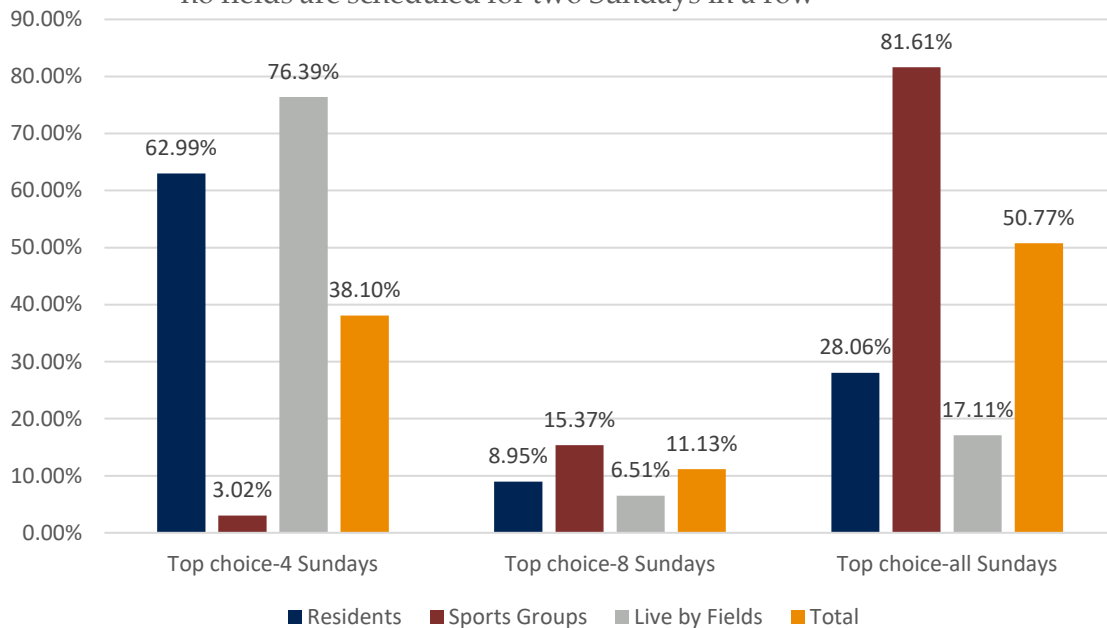
Survey results were analyzed in the following groupings and are shown in the following charts:

- 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)

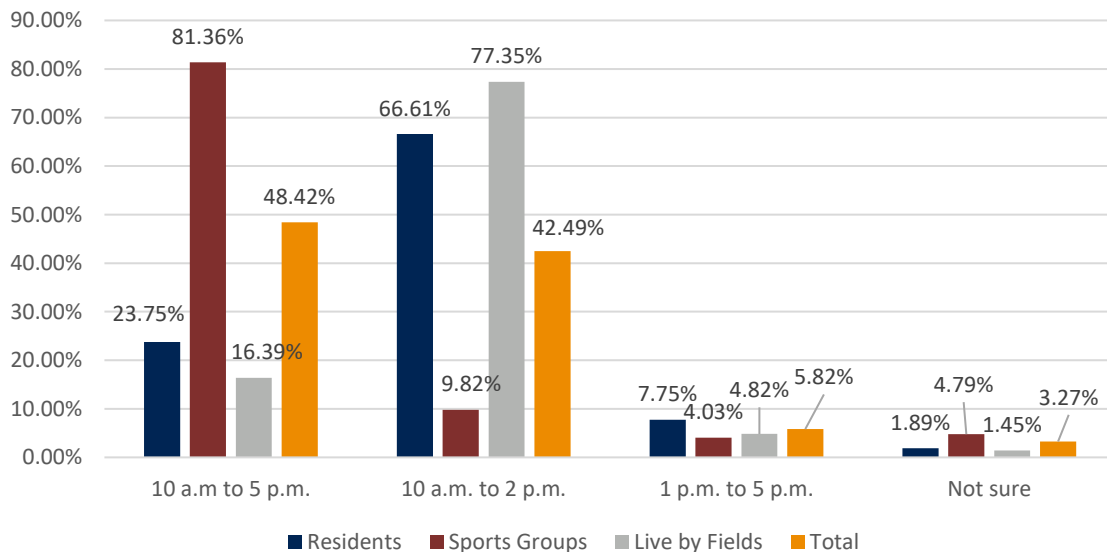


If Sunday use is expanded to allow general practice and games, please rank the following options in order of preference.

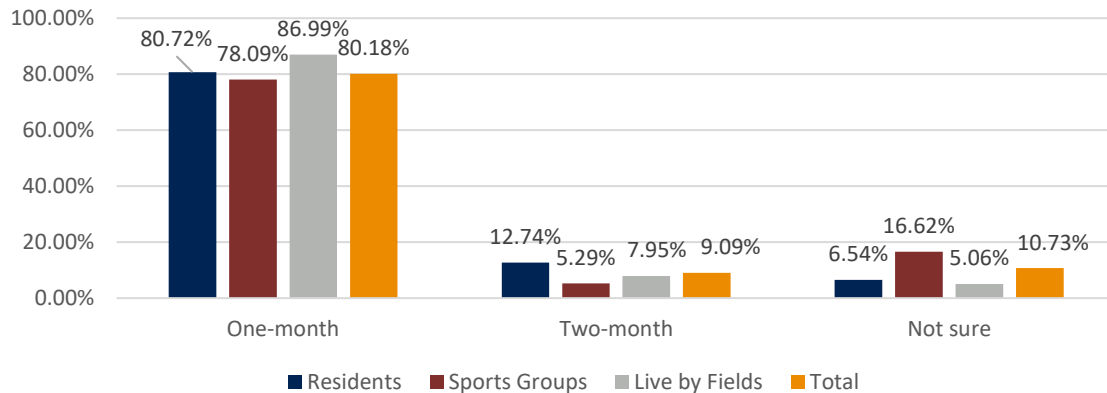
- Allow each sports group to use a field four (4) Sundays a year
- Allow each sports group to use a field eight (8) Sundays a year
- Allow sports groups to use fields on all Sundays, provided that no fields are scheduled for two Sundays in a row



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.

On April 8, 2021 the Parks and Recreation Commission considered the updated Athletic Field Use Policy. The Commission recognized that residents preferred no additional Sunday use while sports groups could benefit from opportunities for make-up games

and limited Sunday use. The Commission wanted to continue to support the recreational use of fields by residents and families.

After discussion, the Parks and Recreation Commission recommended allowing each group to reserve a field on two additional Sundays a year from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. for games and practices. This would be in addition to any Sunday use that is currently allowed such as tournaments and groups primarily serving individuals with disabilities.

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. 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.

The Parks and Recreation Commission recommended moving from a per player fee to an hourly fee structure. The Commission was concerned about the increase in fees but was supportive of more competitive fees in line with neighboring cities.

The Commission considered the estimated 25% and 40% cost recovery options presented. While 40% cost recovery is often used in Parks and Recreation fees, the 25% cost recovery option was included to ease in the increase. Due to the significant increase from current rates, the Commission recommended a phased approach for the youth resident groups beginning at \$10/hour/field, with all other categories starting at 25% cost recovery levels. The Commission suggested a \$5 increase per year until the 25% cost recovery schedule was reached but deferred to staff to determine appropriate increases in subsequent years based on actual use. This fee structure would result in an estimated 17% to 20% cost recovery initially.

Options for Field Use Hourly Fees

Proposed Fee categories	Average Cost in Neighboring Cities	Commission Recommendation (Estimated 17% to 20% Cost Recovery)	Estimated 25% Cost Recovery Option	Estimated 40% Cost Recovery Option
City of Cupertino at any field/CUSD programs at JUA fields	No charge	No charge	No charge	No charge

Non-profit organizations serving individuals with a disability	N/A*	No charge	No charge	No charge
Resident (≥ 51%), nonprofit youth organizations	\$30/hour/field	\$10/hour/field	\$20/hour/field	\$30/hour/field
Non-resident, nonprofit youth organizations	\$78/hour/field	\$30/hour/field	\$30/hour/field	\$50/hour/field
Resident adult (≥ 51%) or for-profit youth organizations	\$49/hour/field	\$50/hour/field	\$50/hour/field	\$60/hour/field
Non-resident adult or for-profit youth organizations	\$85/hour/field	\$60/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	FY 18/19 Total Fees Paid	Commission Recommendation (Estimated 17% to 20% Cost Recovery)	Estimated 25% Cost Recovery Fees	Estimated 40% Cost Recovery Fees
Resident Groups (≥ 51%)				
AYSO-35	\$8,008.00	\$11,220.00	\$22,440.00	\$44,880.00
California Cricket Academy	\$1,177.00	\$7,760.00	\$15,520.00	\$31,040.00
Cupertino Little League	\$3,278.00	\$15,910.00	\$31,820.00	\$63,640.00
Cupertino Football Club	\$6,501.00	\$11,150.00	\$22,300.00	\$44,600.00
Golden Triangle Soccer	\$506.00 (new group-1 season only)	\$4,440.00	\$8,800.00	\$17,600.00
U.S. Youth Volleyball League	\$2,794.00	\$800.00	\$1,600.00	\$2,400.00
Non-resident Groups				
AYSO-64	\$3,520.00	\$11,580.00	\$11,580.00	\$19,300.00
Cupertino Girls Softball	\$1,529.00	\$22,800.00	\$22,800.00	\$38,000.00
De Anza Youth Soccer	\$110,616.00	\$231,600.00	\$231,600.00	\$386,000.00
Total	\$137,929.00	\$317,220.00	\$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. The Parks and Recreation Commission expressed support for this approach.

Parks and Recreation Commission Recommendation

On April 8, the Parks and Recreation Commission unanimously recommended (with a Commissioner absent) that City Council adopt the Updated Athletic Field Use Policy with the following components:

- Expand Sunday use to allow each group to reserve a field on two additional Sundays a year from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. for games and practices
- An hourly fee structure including:
 - City of Cupertino at any field/CUSD programs at JUA fields—no charge
 - Non-profit organizations primarily serving individuals with a disability—no charge
 - Resident, nonprofit youth organizations – \$10/hour/field
 - Non-resident, nonprofit youth organizations – \$30/hour/field
 - Resident adult or resident for-profit youth organizations – \$50/hour/field
 - Non-resident adult or non-resident for-profit youth organizations — \$60/hour/field
- Scheduling field closures as needed

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. The

fee structure recommended by the Parks and Recreation Commission would result in an estimated \$317,220 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 \$374,908 under the model recommended by Parks and Recreation Commission (20% cost recovery), 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.

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

Dianne Thompson, Assistant City Manager

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

F – Policy Comparison Chart