Athletic Field Program

Program Description

The Athletic Field Program facilitates the development, maintenance, and replacement of athletic fields throughout the County. This program includes both grass and synthetic turf fields, field lighting replacement, and other sports programs. The Program represents a coordinated effort between the Park Authority, the Department of Neighborhood and Community Services (NCS), and Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS).

Program Initiatives

The Board of Supervisors identified the maintenance and development of athletic fields at Fairfax County Public Schools and Park Authority properties as a critical requirement and approved the implementation of an Athletic Services Fee, dedicated primarily for the enhancement of maintenance of school athletic fields, the implementation of synthetic turf fields, and custodial support for indoor sports organizations. A significant General Fund contribution to athletic field maintenance is approved annually as well.

The maintenance of athletic fields generally includes trash removal, provision of portable toilets, field lighting, fencing, irrigation, bleachers and player benches, mowing, infield prepping and renovations, full-service turf grass programs (fertilizer, soil amendments, soil samples, weed, and insect control) for parks and high schools, and aeration and seeding for all other schools. Maintenance efforts also include a schedule for recently completed irrigation and lighting replacement projects at County/FCPA fields and irrigation systems on FCPS fields. These maintenance efforts improve safety standards, enhance playing conditions, and increase user satisfaction. The Park Authority is responsible for the maintenance of 715 athletic fields, including 452 Fairfax County Public School (FCPS) fields and 263 Park Authority fields. This total includes 104 synthetic turf fields of which 24 are FCPS stadium fields and 80 are County Park/FCPS non-stadium fields. There are over 130,000 youth and adult participants annually on rectangular fields that benefit from synthetic turf fields. Synthetic turf fields allow for year-round use in most weather, which increases playable hours, provides playing surfaces and conditions that are similar to grass fields, and eliminates the need for watering, mowing, and fertilizing. Most manufacturers provide an eight-year warranty for a properly maintained synthetic turf field; however, it is a generally accepted practice to assume a life expectancy of the synthetic turf field of no more than 10 years.

In FY 2025, the Athletic Service Fees will increase from $5.50 per participant per season and $15 for tournament team fees to $10 per participant per season and $20 for tournament team fees for diamond field users and indoor gym users. The rate for rectangular field users will increase from $8.00 per participant per season and $50 for tournament team fees to $10 per participant per season and $60 for tournament team fees. These increased fees will generate an additional $710,000 for the athletic field capital program. Finally, the fee for non-County participants will increase from $30 to $50 for all field types per player, generating an additional estimated $1,017,836 for the athletic field capital program. This revenue had previously been posted to the General Fund; however, beginning in FY 2025, all revenue associated with field use will be posted to Fund 30010, General Construction and Contribution, and directly applied to the Athletic Sports Program. All revenue projected in FY 2025 will support indoor gym custodial fees, maintenance of diamond fields, turf field replacement, turf field development and sports scholarships. Due to the potential negative impact of this fee increase on vulnerable populations, a larger portion of the revenue increase has been dedicated to sports scholarships.

Funding in the amount of $10,916,174 has been included for the athletic field maintenance and sports program in FY 2025. This level of funding is supported by a General Fund transfer of $7,713,338 and revenue generated from the Athletic Services Fee in the amount of $3,202,836. The FY 2025 General Fund transfer represents an increase of $345,000 from the FY 2024 Adopted Budget Plan level of $7,368,338 and has been included to support Park Authority field maintenance requirements. The FY 2025 Athletic Fee revenue directly applied to the program is projected to increase $1,727,836 from the FY 2024 Adopted Budget Plan level of $1,475,000.

Of the Athletic Services Fee total, $1,732,836 will be dedicated to the turf field replacement program, $603,000 will be dedicated to custodial support for indoor sports organizations, $544,000 will be dedicated to maintenance of diamond fields, $248,000 will be dedicated for the Youth Sports Scholarship Program and $75,000 will be dedicated to synthetic turf field development.

Current Project Descriptions

1. **Athletic Fields - APRT Amenity Maintenance (Countywide):** This project provides for annual routine maintenance of girls' softball field amenities on selected Fairfax County Public School sites. These amenities, such as dugouts, fencing, and irrigation systems, were added or constructed by the County based on recommendations by the citizen-led Action Plan Review Team (APRT) to reduce disparities in the quality of fields assigned to boys' baseball and girls' softball organizations. Routine maintenance is necessary both to maintain equity and to ensure safety. Funding of $50,000 for this project has been included in FY 2025. This project is supported entirely by the General Fund.

2. **Athletic Fields - FCPS Field Maintenance (Countywide):** This is a continuing project to provide for the mowing of athletic fields at FCPS elementary and middle schools. This project is designed to improve the quality of the school fields playing condition, improve safety standards, and increase user satisfaction. The program provides for mowing of the fields, as well as the aeration and over-seeding of the fields. These services are provided by the FCPA through established service contracts. Funding of $1,465,338 for this project has been included in FY 2025. This project is supported entirely by the General Fund.

3. **Athletic Fields - FCPS Lighting Upgrades (Countywide):** This project provides for the continuous upgrades of athletic field lighting at Fairfax County Public Schools middle and high schools. Funding supports the replacement and repair schedule for existing lighting systems. Funding supports ongoing installation, replacement, and repair projects, and is coordinated by NCS. Funding of $250,000 for this project has been included in FY 2025. This project is supported entirely by the General Fund.

4. **Athletic Fields - Girls Softball Equity (Countywide):** This project provides annual maintenance funding of $300,000 per year to support girls' softball fields as recommended by the Girls' Fastpitch Softball Equity Action Plan Review Team. Funding of $300,000 for this project has been included in FY 2025. This project is supported entirely by the General Fund.

5. **Athletic Fields - Girls Softball Equity – Capital (Braddock District):** This project provides one-time funding to support recommendations from the Girls' Fastpitch Softball Equity Action Plan Review Team to address disparities between girls' softball and boys' baseball facilities. This one-time funding will be used to improve fields and related infrastructure at six fields within Wakefield Park to accommodate use by girls' softball teams and organizations.

6. **Athletic Fields - Park Field Maintenance (Countywide):** This is a continuing project to provide maintenance on athletic fields managed by FCPA. Funding is included for continued personnel and operating costs associated with the program including electricity for lighted facilities, maintenance of lighting systems, water for irrigated facilities, irrigation system maintenance, minor ball field repairs, and capital equipment. This program is designed to improve playing conditions and to achieve safety standards. Funding of $3,223,000 for this project has been included in FY 2025, an increase of $345,000 over the FY 2024 Adopted Budget Plan level of $2,878,000 to address increasing maintenance requirements. This project is supported entirely by the General Fund.

7. **Athletic Services Fee - Custodial Support (Countywide):** This is a continuing project to provide custodial support for indoor gyms used by community-based athletic organizations during their assigned primary scheduling season. Funding of $603,000 for this project has been included in FY 2025, an increase of $328,000 over the FY 2024 Adopted Budget Plan level of $275,000. This project is supported entirely by the Athletic Services Fee.

8. **Athletic Services Fee - FCPS Diamond Fields (Countywide):** This is a continuing project to supplement the level of maintenance by FCPA on athletic fields at FCPS sites, by providing a consistent mowing frequency schedule for high school diamond fields, as well as diamond infield preparation twice a week for elementary, middle, and high school fields. This project also provides funding for post-season field treatment standards and a maintenance schedule for recently completed irrigation and lighting replacement projects at County/FCPA fields and irrigation systems on FCPS fields. Funding of $1,294,000 for this project has been included in FY 2025, an increase of $294,000 over the FY 2024 Adopted Budget Plan level of $1,000,000. This project is supported by $544,000 in the Athletic Services Fee revenue and $750,000 from the General Fund.

9. **Athletic Services Fee - Sports Scholarships (Countywide):** The Youth Sports Scholarship Program provides support for youth from low-income families who want to participate in community-based sports programs. Funding of $473,000 for this project is included in FY 2025, an increase of $173,000 over the FY 2024 Adopted Budget Plan level of $300,000. Funding of $248,000 is based on anticipated revenue generated from the Athletic Services Fee, and $225,000 is supported by the General Fund. A larger portion of revenue generated by the proposed Athletic Service Fee increase has been proposed for scholarships to help offset the potential negative impact on vulnerable populations.

10. **Athletic Services Fee - Turf Field Development (Countywide):** This is a continuing project to facilitate the development of synthetic turf fields at Park and FCPS sites. Funding of $75,000 for this project has been included in FY 2025, consistent with the FY 2024 Adopted Budget Plan. No new fee revenue has been proposed to be allocated to this project based on a slowdown in requirements, existing project balances, and the need to redirect additional revenue to Sports Scholarships. This project is supported entirely by the Athletic Services Fee.

11. **Athletic Services Fee - Turf Field Replacement (Countywide):** This project provides for the establishment of a synthetic turf field replacement program. There are a total of 104 synthetic turf fields throughout the County, of which 24 are FCPS fields and 80 are County fields. Funding is required to begin to address the growing need for field replacement as established by the replacement schedule over the next 10 years. Staff has developed a 10-year replacement plan for the current inventory; however, additional funding will be required in the future to continue the gradual replacement of turf fields as they reach the end of their useful life. An amount of $3,182,836 is included for the turf field replacement program in FY 2025, an increase of $932,836 over the FY 2024 Adopted Budget Plan level of $2,250,000. Funding in the amount of $1,732,836 is proposed from the Athletic Services Fee revenue and $1,450,000 from the General Fund.

Project Cost Summaries

Athletic Field Program

($000's)

	Project Title Project Number	Source of Funds	Budgeted or Expended Through FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	Total FY 2025 - FY 2029	Total FY 2030 - FY 2034	Total
1	Athletic Fields - APRT Amenity Maintenance	G	***C***	***$50***	$50	$50	$50	$50	$250	$250	$500
	2G79-220-000										
2	Athletic Fields - FCPS Field Maintenance	G	***C***	***$1,465***	$1,465	$1,465	$1,465	$1,465	$7,325	$7,325	$14,650
	2G51-001-000										
3	Athletic Fields - FCPS Lighting Upgrades	G	***C***	***$250***	$250	$250	$250	$250	$1,250	$1,250	$2,500
	PR-000082										
4	Athletic Fields - Girls Softball Equity	G	***C***	***$300***	$300	$300	$300	$300	$1,500	$1,500	$3,000
	2G51-055-000										
5	Athletic Fields - Girls Softball Equity - Capital	G	***$2,650***						$0		$2,650
	PR-000161										
6	Athletic Fields - Park Field Maintenance	G	***C***	***$3,223***	$3,223	$3,223	$3,223	$3,223	$16,115	$16,115	$32,230
	2G51-002-000										
7	Athletic Services Fee - Custodial Support	X	***C***	***$603***	$603	$603	$603	$603	$3,015	$3,015	$6,030
	2G79-219-000										
8	Athletic Services Fee - FCPS Diamond Fields	G, X	***C***	***$1,294***	$1,294	$1,294	$1,294	$1,294	$6,470	$6,470	$12,940
	2G51-003-000										
9	Athletic Services Fee - Sports Scholarships	G, X	***C***	***$473***	$473	$473	$473	$473	$2,365	$2,365	$4,730
	2G79-221-000										
10	Athletic Services Fee - Turf Field Development	X	***C***	***$75***	$75	$75	$75	$75	$375	$375	$750
	PR-000080										
11	Athletic Services Fee - Turf Field Replacement	G, X	***C***	***$3,183***	$3,183	$3,183	$3,183	$3,183	$15,915	$15,915	$31,830
	PR-000097										
	Total		***$2,650***	**$10,916**	**$10,916**	**$10,916**	**$10,916**	**$10,916**	**$54,580**	**$54,580**	**$111,810**

Notes: Numbers in bold italics represent funded amounts. A "C" in the 'Budgeted or Expended' column denotes a continuing project.

Key: Source of Funds

B	Bonds
F	Federal
G	General Fund
S	State
U	Undetermined
X	Other