

Response to Questions on the FY 2010 County Lines of Business & Schools Program Review Processes Fall 2008

Request By: Supervisor McKay

Question: In the Department of Community and Recreation Services (CRS), what is the relationship between decreased field use monitoring funding and future field maintenance costs?

Response: There is no specific method of determining the maintenance costs being avoided through field monitoring and other elements of the walk-on prevention program in CRS. However, anecdotal data obtained through staff and community feedback points to at least three areas in which additional costs are being prevented:

First, several community athletic groups had been considering discontinuing their adoptions of school and park fields prior to the implementation of the program. This drop-off has not occurred, as field adoptions have remained steady over the past several years and have slightly increased since FY 2006. It is estimated that community athletic organizations contribute the equivalent of over \$1 million annually to field development and maintenance. Based on community feedback, one reason groups have maintained their involvement is that, through the walk-on program, they feel the County has implemented a proactive approach in protecting the substantial investment being made in county fields.

Second, the enforcement, outreach and education components of the program have had the dual effect of increasing the number of groups that receive space through the legitimate permit process (as opposed to walking on) and increasing the knowledge and awareness of all groups regarding proper field use. The need to conduct emergency repairs on fields (e.g., due to a group playing on a wet field) is rare, so a direct cost savings may not be calculable. However, feedback from the athletic community indicates a real improvement in field quality across the county. As the overall quality of fields increases, injuries decrease and maintenance efforts are more likely to continue to improve the playing surface, as opposed to simply correcting problems.

Third, amenities such as signage, portable toilets and trash cans contribute to keeping the fields in decent shape. For example, it takes much less time to empty a trash can than to pick litter up from a field, giving school custodians and park maintenance staff more time to focus on other duties.