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 Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA), the Department of Neighborhood and Community Services (NCS), and Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS).

Link to the Comprehensive Plan

Fairfax County's Comprehensive Plan, Public Facilities Element includes the countywide objectives 1-7, which apply to all facility types and the Parks and Recreation Element's objectives 1-7 as shown below:

- Identify and serve current and future park and recreation needs through an integrated park system that provides equitable access to parks open space, recreational services and facilities, and stewardship of natural and cultural resources.
- Protect appropriate land areas in a natural state to ensure preservation of significant and sensitive natural resources.
- Protect and preserve significant cultural resources on parklands.
- Provide for current and future park and recreational needs through a combination of development of new and existing sites and the optimal use of all existing facilities.
- Ensure the long-term protection, preservation and sustainability of park resources.
- Ensure the mitigation of adverse impacts to park and recreation facilities and service levels caused by growth and land development through the provision of proffers, conditions, contributions, commitments, and land dedication.
- The Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Access (PROSA) Strategy, a framework for equitable access to the Fairfax County park system, guides park investments to improve 10-minute walk access to Fairfax County Park Authority parks, enhances access to complete park experiences, enriches habitat connectivity between environmental corridors, and analyzes, and prioritizes recreation needs and projects with an equity lens.

Source: Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, 2017 Edition; Policy Plan - Public Facilities, Amended through 5-7-2024 and Policy Plan - Parks and Recreation, Amended through 12-9-2025

Program Initiatives

The Board of Supervisors has 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 school fields. 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 706 athletic fields, including 442 Fairfax County Public School (FCPS) fields and 264 Park Authority fields. This total includes 105 synthetic turf fields of which 52 are FCPS fields, 51 are FCPA managed fields, and two are owned by the Board of Supervisors and Town of Vienna, respectively. 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 2027, the Athletic Service Fees will increase from $10 per participant per season and $20 for tournament fees to $12 per participant per season and $60 for tournament fees for diamond field users and indoor gym users. The rate for rectangular field users will increase from $10 to $12 per participant per season and remain at $60 for tournament fees. Finally, the fee for non-County participants will increase from $50 to $75 for all field types per player. These fee increases will result in estimated additional revenue of $815,000 to support the athletic field capital program.

Funding in the amount of $11,428,690 has been included for the athletic field maintenance and sports program in FY 2027. This level of funding represents a net increase of $512,516 from the FY 2026 Adopted Budget Plan level. Total FY 2027 funding is supported by a General Fund transfer of $7,410,854 and estimated revenue generated from the Athletic Services Fee in the amount of $4,017,836. The FY 2027 General Fund transfer represents a decrease of $302,484 from the FY 2026 Adopted Budget Plan level of $7,713,338. The FY 2027 Athletic Fee revenue is projected to increase $815,000 from the FY 2026 Adopted Budget Plan level of $3,202,836 to support indoor gym custodial fees, maintenance of diamond fields, and turf field replacement.

Equity Initiatives

Equity Review and Initiatives

The Park Authority utilizes the principles of the One Fairfax Policy in the development and maintenance of athletic fields. Maintenance standards based on available resources are established to ensure a consistent level of quality across the County. Capital and other amenity improvements are reviewed and implemented with an equity lens. For example, the need for improvements to help ensure gender equity were recently identified for girls' softball. Improvements to girls softball fields at Wakefield Park are being implemented to improve the playing experience and include conversion of one of the athletic fields to synthetic turf, new and additional fencing, enhanced dug outs and a new lighting system. The Park Authority will continue to prioritize funding for athletic field improvements based on community needs and previous investments to ensure all residents in the County have access to high quality athletic fields.

Current Project Descriptions

1. **Athletic Fields - FCPS Field Maintenance (Countywide):** This is a continuing project to provide for the mowing of rectangular 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, 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 2027. This project is supported entirely by the General Fund.

2. **Athletic Fields - Girls Equity – Capital (Braddock District):** $2,650,000 has been provide in 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 funding will be used to improve softball fields and related infrastructure at six fields within Wakefield Park to accommodate use by girls' softball teams and organizations.

3. **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 2027. This project is supported entirely by the General Fund.

4. **Athletic Fields - Lighting Upgrades (Countywide):** This project provides for the continuous upgrades of athletic field lighting at FCPS middle and high schools. Funding supports the replacement and repair schedule for existing lighting systems and ongoing installation, replacement, and repair projects, as coordinated by NCS. Funding of $250,000 for this project has been included in FY 2027. This project is supported entirely by the General Fund.

5. **Athletic Fields – NCS APRT Amenities (Countywide):** This project provides for annual routine maintenance of girls' softball field amenities on selected FCPS 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 2027. This project is supported entirely by the General Fund.

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 $3,359,871 for this project has been included in FY 2027 and is supported entirely by the General Fund.

7. **Athletic Services Fee - FCPS Diamonds (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 $1,393,255 for this project has been included in FY 2027. This project is supported by $747,750 from the Athletic Services Fee revenue and $645,505 from the General Fund.

8. **Athletic Services Fee – NCS 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 $806,750 for this project has been included in FY 2027 and is supported entirely by the Athletic Services Fee.

9. **Athletic Services Fee – NCS 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 2027. Funding of $248,000 is from the Athletic Services Fee, and $225,000 is supported by the General Fund.

10. **Athletic Services Fee - Turf Development (Countywide):** This is a continuing project to facilitate the development of synthetic turf fields at Park and FCPS sites. As most turf fields have now been installed, funding of $75,000 for this project has been redirected to the Turf Replacement project in FY 2027. This project was supported entirely by the Athletic Services Fee.

11. **Athletic Services Fee - Turf Replacement (Countywide):** This project provides for the establishment of a synthetic turf field replacement program. There are a total of 105 synthetic turf fields of which 52 are FCPS fields, 51 are FCPA managed fields, and two are owned by the Board of Supervisors and Town of Vienna, respectively. 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 $3,330,476 is included for the turf field replacement program in FY 2027. Funding in the amount of $2,215,336 is from Athletic Services Fee revenue and $1,115,140 is included from the General Fund.

Project Cost Summaries

Athletic Field Program

($000's)

	Project Title Project Number	Source of Funds	Budgeted or Expended Through FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	FY 2031	Total FY 2027 - FY 2031	Total FY 2032 - FY 2036	Total
1	Athletic Fields - FCPS Field Maintenance	G	***C***	***$1,465***	$1,465	$1,465	$1,465	$1,465	$7,325	$7,325	$14,650
	2G51-065-000										
2	Athletic Fields - Girls Equity - Capital	G	***$2,650***						$0		$2,650
	PR-000182										
3	Athletic Fields - Girls Softball Equity	G	***C***	***$300***	$300	$300	$300	$300	$1,500	$1,500	$3,000
	2G51-072-000										
4	Athletic Fields - Lighting Upgrades	G	***C***	***$250***	$250	$250	$250	$250	$1,250	$1,250	$2,500
	PR-000181										
5	Athletic Fields - NCS APRT Amenities	G	***C***	***$50***	$50	$50	$50	$50	$250	$250	$500
	2G79-233-000										
6	Athletic Fields - Park Field Maintenance	G	***C***	***$3,360***	$3,360	$3,360	$3,360	$3,360	$16,800	$16,800	$33,600
	2G51-069-000										
7	Athletic Services Fee - FCPS Diamonds	G, X	***C***	***$1,393***	$1,393	$1,393	$1,393	$1,393	$6,965	$6,965	$13,930
	2G51-066-000										
8	Athletic Services Fee - NCS Custodial	X	***C***	***$807***	$807	$807	$807	$807	$4,035	$4,035	$8,070
	2G79-231-000										
9	Athletic Services Fee - NCS Scholarships	G, X	***C***	***$473***	$473	$473	$473	$473	$2,365	$2,365	$4,730
	2G79-232-000										
10	Athletic Services Fee - Turf Development	X	***$898***						$0		$898
	PR-000175										
11	Athletic Services Fee - Turf Replacement	G, X	***C***	***$3,330***	$3,330	$3,330	$3,330	$3,330	$16,650	$16,650	$33,300
	PR-000176										
	Total		***$3,548***	**$11,428**	**$11,428**	**$11,428**	**$11,428**	**$11,428**	**$57,140**	**$57,140**	**$117,828**

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