

Fairfax County Park Authority

LOB #330:

ATHLETIC FIELD MAINTENANCE (FCPA AND FCPS)

Purpose

This LOB provides 688 accessible and well maintained community athletic fields (268 FCPA fields and 420 FCPS fields) for use by Fairfax County residents and visitors.

Description

This LOB provides grounds maintenance on 268 FCPA athletic fields and an additional 420 County-owned athletic fields for usage to over 200 Youth and Adult Sports Organizations as well as walk-on usage by Fairfax County residents and visitors. This line of business includes utilities and electrical maintenance for 113 lighted athletic fields and for 113 irrigated FCPA athletic fields. Maintenance of athletic fields located within parks is provided by Park Authority staff, while maintenance of FCPS and County-owned athletic fields are managed contractually by Park Authority staff. Maintenance is provided seasonally for natural grass and year-round for synthetic turf athletic fields. The varied field types require a variety of equipment and knowledge to maintain the fields and keep them safe and available. The following is a breakout of Diamond and Rectangle Athletic Fields available for scheduling by Neighborhood and Community Services:

FCPA	145	Natural Grass	83	Natural Grass
FCPA	1	Synthetic Turf	39	Synthetic Turf
FCPS/County-owned	<u>219</u>	Natural Grass	<u>201</u>	Natural Grass
Total Diamonds	365		Total Rectangles	323

Residents of all ages belong to the Youth and Adult Sports Organizations that use athletic fields year-round. Athletic fields support sports activities such as baseball, softball, football, soccer, lacrosse, field hockey, rugby and cricket for the fitness and health of the Fairfax County community.

This LOB was enacted in 1991 and the County expanded it to include other athletic fields from Elementary Schools, Middle Schools, High Schools, and some Community Centers beginning in 2001.

Benefits

The maintenance of the fields ensures safe (less risk of injury from poor field conditions) and accessible field use for all County residents and visitors. The availability of quality fields provides livable spaces, opportunity for community connections and contributes to the improved health and wellness of all users. Synthetic turf athletic fields enable year-round field use. Athletic Field maintenance aligns with the Fairfax County Vision of Maintaining Safe and Caring Communities, Building Livable Spaces, Creating a Culture of Engagement, and Practicing Environmental Stewardship.

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Mandates

This LOB is responsible for complying with the State Code and abiding by the County's MS4 permit. The MS4 is currently partially mandated and will be fully mandated in 2020. There is a Turf Plan identified for each of Park Authority's Athletic Fields.

Code of Virginia -

Virginia Department of Environmental Quality Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permits <http://www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/Water/StormwaterManagement/VSMPPermits/MS4Permits.aspx>

Phase II MS4 Permit in VA Administrative Code

Table 1 (located at <http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?000+reg+9VAC25-890-40>) shows that identification of locations needing NMPs is required within 12 months of permit coverage and required NMPs must be developed within 60 months. Specifics are in Section II.B.6.c. Turf and landscape management.

Fairfax County Permit –

Fairfax County MS4 permit:

The NMP requirements are in Section I.B.2.d. Pesticide, Herbicide, and Fertilizer Application on page 8 of the permit. <http://www.fairfaxCounty.gov/dpwes/stormwater/va0088587-fairfax-permit.pdf>

Park Authority Athletic Field Turf Nutrient Plan -

Example of Nutrient Plan: [Braddock Park Turf Nutrient Plan](#)

Trends and Challenges

The main trends include the following:

- Convert from natural turf to synthetic turf,
- Provide all-season access to the fields,
- Demand for field space and diversity continues to grow,
- Need for additional staffing and funds needed to maintain growing inventory of fields,
- Declining useful life of fields due to high demand/usage,
- Need to examine alternative synthetic turf products, and
- Constant re-evaluation of maintenance practices to improve field quality.

The major challenges that this LOB faces are the following:

- Growing costs of utilities and maintenance,
- Age of critical capital equipment,
- Aging infrastructure including lighting and irrigation,
- Demand for higher quality amenities at the fields such as dugouts and batting cages,
- Scheduling of synthetic turf through the Department of Neighborhood and Community Services,
- Synthetic turf fields are available for use year round driving up the utility and maintenance costs,
- Natural grass fields are not available year round, and
- Natural fields require more maintenance and seasonal preparation than synthetic turf fields.

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Resources

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted
LOB #330: Athletic Field Maintenance (FCPA and FCPS)			
FUNDING			
<u>Expenditures:</u>			
Compensation	\$2,222,027	\$2,157,803	\$2,660,106
Operating Expenses	929,178	979,884	891,650
Work Performed for Others	(1,678,000)	(1,736,762)	(1,878,097)
Total Expenditures	\$1,473,205	\$1,449,725	\$1,673,659
General Fund Expenditures	\$1,473,205	\$1,449,725	\$1,673,659
Total Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0
POSITIONS			
Authorized Positions/Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)			
<u>Positions:</u>			
Regular	51 / 51	51 / 51	51 / 51
Total Positions	51 / 51	51 / 51	51 / 51

Metrics

Metric Indicator	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Estimate	FY 2017 Estimate
Percent of FCPA natural grass athletic field maintenance performed by partners	29%	30%	30%	32%	33%
Maintenance costs avoided per natural grass field due to maintenance performed by partners	\$491,249	\$512,330	\$512,330	\$534,765	\$562,229
Total Field Participants	229,684	229,253	227,988	230,000	230,000
FCPA and FCPS Athletic Fields available for scheduling	94%	93%	93%	94%	94%

To help avoid maintenance costs, the Park Authority provides a Full Adoption program for natural grass fields where User Groups can adopt athletic fields and provide turf maintenance, infield maintenance, trash removal, mowing, and lining in exchange for extended access to the adopted field(s) and other incentives. By having user groups adopt and maintain the fields, the Park Authority avoids maintenance costs of \$8,703 per natural grass diamond field and \$5,209 per natural grass rectangular field.

The overall goal is to provide safe and usable athletic fields. Further the Park Authority wants to ensure that these fields are available for use 94 percent of the time. Approximately 230,000 unique participants use Fairfax County fields.