



# Memorandum

To: Jason Wicha, City Manager

From: Deerpath Park Synthetic Turf Athletic Fields Advisory Group

Date: August 22, 2022

Re: Advisory Group Recommendations

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the Advisory Group's recommendations for enhancements to the Deerpath Park Synthetic Turf Athletic Fields Design Project.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Deerpath Park Synthetic Turf Athletic Fields Advisory Group was formed by City Manager, Jason Wicha, in May 2022. It was established as a short-term body charged with advising, challenging, and offering insight to City staff and the City's consultants as plans and designs are developed for improvements to the City's athletic fields at Deerpath Park with synthetic turf related amenities.

Group members were selected to provide expertise in the areas of architecture, engineering, field playability and performance, player safety, site design, land planning, landscaping, sustainable design, and knowledge of the practical and operational aspects of synthetic athletic turf fields. The Group is chaired by Prue Beidler and members include David Hamming, Ken Mrock, Marion Cartwright, Mike Bleck, Paul Best, Rick Amos, Sara LaCasse, and Susie Kullby.

The Group was charged with

- Reviewing the scope of work proposed by the architecture and design firm approved by the Council for the project and offering comments prior to the start of the design development process.
- Hearing one or more status reports from City staff and the consultants as design development work is progressing and offering input, raising questions, challenging assumptions, and providing insights.
- Hearing a presentation of the draft project design from the consultant and offering input prior to City staff finalizing a recommendation on the overall project design for City Council consideration.

## CONCEPTS EXPLORED

The Advisory Group discussed many concepts raised by the City staff team and members of the consulting team. Some of the concepts discussed included overall site/field layout, sustainability elements, traffic/parking elements, future maintenance needs, and safety issues.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. As plans move forward with adding synthetic turf at Deerpath Park to address playability issues for multiple sporting activities, the Advisory Group recommends that the City continue to view Deerpath Park as a community park, rather than as an athletic complex. Community Parks focus on meeting community-wide recreation needs that serve as gathering places and general athletics, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces. As such, **the Advisory Group recommends that the City support the long-range Conceptual Vision Plan for the park with amenities that benefit the entire community**, such as a playground, fitness features and a walking path. The Advisory Group also recognized that there are future opportunities for the site that should continue to be explored, such as the concept of installing a large air-supported dome to provide year-round athletic space and many other activities.
2. The Advisory Group reviewed the layout options presented by City staff and the consulting team and discussed the two scenarios for synthetic athletic field sizes, 7.6 and 9.5-acre fields, as directed by the City Council. Based on the programming needs of the site and the potential layout options, and limitations due to floodplain and floodway restrictions, the **Advisory Group recommends the City continue the design process with a preference for a 9.5-acre synthetic athletic field layout**. The Advisory Group also supported the concept of having park support buildings on the north and south ends of the park for restrooms and storage, as well as the addition of a maintenance shop. In addition, the Advisory Group preferred the concept featuring a hard surface corridor in the center of the field to be used for access (walking path), spectator viewing areas, and to accommodate field lighting and shade structures.
3. City staff presented material options being considered for the synthetic turf fields. City staff has met with various synthetic turf companies to explore the options for the turf pile, shock pads, and infill. In addition, they have visited numerous synthetic turf fields to assess the option that would best fit the community's needs. **The Advisory Group agrees with the criteria that City staff is using to evaluate options and that the overall project goals are player safety, playability, maintenance, durability, and environmental sensitivity**. However, the final selection of materials has not been determined.