

Sports Field Development Programme

File No: X006324

Summary

The *Open Space, Sports and Recreation Needs Study* (2016) forecast the need to increase capacity equivalent to 20 turf fields (16,000 playable hours) by 2030. This report provides four strategies to meet this target:

- (a) increase capacity of existing sports field sites;
- (b) build new sports fields on existing City of Sydney sites;
- (c) partner with other land owners to provide for public use; and
- (d) purchase land and construct.

In 2017, the City approved a sports field upgrade programme in its 10 Year Capital Works Plan. This programme will upgrade and construct a number of sports fields across the City of Sydney local government area to meet growing demand. A key strategy is to introduce multiuse synthetic grass fields in the City's portfolio. Synthetic fields provide a far higher usage capacity than traditional grass fields. This report provides an update on the progress made with the programme.

Three synthetic fields are already underway. Gunyama Park in Zetland will be the City's first synthetic sports field, and is due to be completed mid-2020. A FIFA senior multi-purpose synthetic sports field is being constructed in partnership with the Department of Education, at Alexandria Park Community School, Alexandria, and is due to be completed in 2022. Perry Park in Alexandria is in design stage and will provide a multi-purpose synthetic FIFA senior field and new amenities block in 2023.

The results of technical investigation studies have highlighted that three further fields be prioritised for synthetic surfaces and should proceed to implementation. These additional fields are Crescent Park, Annandale, Turruwul Park, Rosebery and Waterloo Oval, Waterloo. Concept designs will be developed and will be used for consultation with the local community, local sporting groups and sports bodies prior to installation of synthetic surfaces at these sites.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council note the content of this report;
- (B) Council approve the development of concept designs for multi-purpose synthetic fields at Crescent Park (Annandale), Turruwul Park (Rosebery) and Waterloo Oval (Waterloo) to use for consultation with sporting groups and the local community prior to implementation; and
- (C) a masterplan for Wentworth Park, Glebe is undertaken and used as a basis for discussion with the NSW Government and the community on how to best manage this important park.

Attachments

Nil.

Background

1. The challenges of a growing population wishing to recreate and play sport (socially, competitively and for training) together with those who are keen to use sport as a means to stay fit is putting pressure on the City's sports fields.
2. The Open Space, Sports and Recreation Needs Study (2016) forecast the need to increase capacity equivalent to 20 turf fields by 2030 to meet growing demand. This increased demand represents a deficit of approximately 16,000 playable hours.
3. This study defines four strategies to meet the additional 16,000 play hours by 2030. These are:
 - (a) increase capacity of existing sports field sites;
 - (b) build new sports fields on existing City of Sydney sites;
 - (c) partner with other land owners; and
 - (d) purchase land and construct.
4. There are 32 sporting fields in the City of Sydney local government area. Of these 13 are directly managed by the City. This portfolio provides a range of field sizes and surfaces which relate to the type of sports that can be accommodated (e.g. compact soccer, FIFA soccer, cricket, rugby etc.).
5. All of the City's fields are currently grass surfaces, and subject to significant impacts from the level of use and weather conditions. These factors constrain the level of use compared to surfaces such as synthetics. Typically grass fields have approximately one third the playing capacity of a synthetic field and require frequent renovation and reurfing leading to field closures.

Strategies for increasing capacity

Increasing capacity of existing sports fields

6. Redeveloping or constructing a synthetic field can take up to two years depending on the site. However, once built, they do not require a significant amount of downtime for maintenance and can last ten years. Synthetic fields are not generally impacted by climate or usage. They also require lower ongoing maintenance and provide consistency and quality of play.
7. As outlined in 2017, the City's approach to the Sports Field Development Programme was to commence building new synthetic surfaces first (e.g. Gunyama Park, Perry Park and Alexandria ParkCommunity High School). This approach provides additional capacity, and allows the City to decant groups from other areas, and progressively upgrade their fields without any adverse impact on available hours.
8. Of the 13 existing fields the City manages, it is envisaged that only a number will be redeveloped into synthetic fields. The prioritisation of fields for the installation of synthetic surfaces is based on a number of factors including:
 - (a) Flood risk - synthetic surfaces are highly susceptible to damage from flood events;

- (b) Impacts on nearby trees – construction of synthetic fields can impact on existing tree roots;
- (c) Some sports favour turf surfaces – it is intended that the City retain a mix of surfaces and sizes;
- (d) Passive uses - synthetic fields are typically fenced to protect the surface and have a retain kerb, which may impact on more casual uses; and
- (e) Impact on neighbourhood - increasing the capacity of a field could result in extended hours which may impact on residential amenity.

9. The following technical studies have been completed for a number of fields:

- (a) Geotechnical investigations;
- (b) Soil sampling and contamination investigations;
- (c) Arborist reports;
- (d) Site surveys; and
- (e) Flood modelling.

10. The results of these investigations are summarised in the table below:

Field	Current use	Proposed surface type	Comments	Estimated Completion	Approximate Additional Capacity (Hours)
Gunyama Park, Joynton Avenue, Zetland	Formerly vacant land - Under construction	Synthetic Multi-purpose compact field	Under construction Field size will increase once adjacent land is dedicated to the City	Mid 2020	2600
Alexandria Community High School	School	FiFa senior sized Synthetic - multi-purpose field	Localised flooding	2022	2500

Field	Current use	Proposed surface type	Comments	Estimated Completion	Approximate Additional Capacity (Hours)
Perry Park Maddox Street, Alexandria	Underutilised passive recreation	FiFa senior sized Synthetic - multi-purpose field	Contamination Some tree impacts Requires full landscape masterplan	2023 - Post completion of Stage 2	3250
Crescent Park, The Crescent, Annandale	Underutilised passive recreation	Compact synthetic multi - purpose field	Contamination Localised flooding	2022	2600
Turruwul Park, Rothschild Avenue, Rosebery	Soccer, touch football Local school sport	Synthetic multi-purpose field	Vulnerable to over use Small scale localised contamination	2022	2500
Waterloo Oval, Elizabeth Street, Waterloo	Rugby league, union, Touch football, soccer training, AFL (9s), cricket	Rugby sized Synthetic - multi-purpose field	Contamination Potential impact on one tree Requires masterplan of full oval and upgrade of grandstand area Vulnerable to over use	2024	2500
Total					15,950

Build synthetic sports fields

11. *Gunyama Park, Joynton Avenue, Zetland* - This will be the City's first synthetic sports field, co-located with the aquatic facility. Due to be completed mid-2020, it will provide 2,600 additional hours per annum.

12. *Perry Park, Maddox Street, Alexandria* - This is a new field located close to Green Square Town Centre and the Ashmore Precinct. Currently in the design stage for a multi-purpose FIFA senior field, and new amenities block. Construction will commence once the stage 2 works at the indoor facility are completed, programmed to be completed by 2023. This field will provide 3,250 additional playable hours per annum.
13. It is recommended that Crescent Park, Annandale, Turruwul Park, Rosebery and Waterloo Oval, Waterloo, are now prioritised.
 - (a) *Crescent Park, The Crescent, Annandale* -
 - (i) Located in Bicentennial Park this is an under-utilised parcel of land, suitable for compact size multi-purpose synthetic field, training and junior games, including hockey. Cricket nets, basketball hoops and a tennis wall for more casual use could also be included;
 - (ii) Its location will increase sports facilities in this area. The site is contaminated and is susceptible to small scale flooding, (which can be dealt with);
 - (iii) The Glebe District Hockey Club recently approached the City proposing a small field suitable for junior teams and practice activities on this site;
 - (iv) This site is preferred over 67 Bourke Road, Alexandria, which is isolated from residential development and its location would make management difficult.
 - (b) *Turruwul Park, Rothschild Avenue, Rosebery* –
 - (i) The field provides for passive recreation and sport. The wider park includes tennis courts, toilet block, playground, picnic and BBQ facilities. The local soccer team had requested the field be upgraded to a synthetic surface.
 - (c) *Waterloo Oval, Elizabeth Street, Waterloo* -
 - (i) The field includes change facilities, storage and a grandstand. The wider oval also includes a skate park and community facility; and
14. Upgrade to a multi-purpose rugby and cricket sized field and include grandstand/change facilities. Subsequent upgrades could include integration of adjacent skate park, a community facility, and improved walking tracks and landscaping. Both Turruwul Park and Waterloo Oval are located in residential areas. Upgrading to synthetic will increase the hours of use of these fields, by providing less downtime due to weather conditions and the annual re-turfing/maintenance.
15. Once implemented, the development of the above fields to synthetic fields, will deliver approximately 15,950 additional playable hours per annum by 2024, meeting the City's target set by the Open Space, Sports and Recreation Needs Study

Partnering with other Organisations

16. The Department of Education is re-building the Alexandria Park Community High School. Included in the upgrade is a synthetic sports field, two multi-purpose outdoor courts and a multi -purpose indoor sports hall. Due to be completed by early 2022; it will provide an additional 2,500 playable hours per annum.

Purchase land and construct

17. Purchasing land is an option being considered for new sports fields. However, land and development costs are very expensive and the scarcity of suitable land within the local government area means the focus is in the southern area of the local government area. Investigations to purchase suitable sites is ongoing, and as in the past, Council will be briefed if and when a suitable option is identified.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030 Vision

18. Sustainable Sydney 2030 is a vision for the sustainable development of the City to 2030 and beyond. It includes 10 strategic directions to guide the future of the City, as well as 10 targets against which to measure progress. This program is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
 - (a) Direction 2 provides a road map for the City to become a leading environmental Performer - This programme is investigating opportunities for capturing rain water, and requiring suppliers to provide full recycling of the turf (cradle to grave)
 - (b) Direction 4 - A City for Walking and Cycling - field upgrades will consider opportunities to integrate walking cycling, including provision for walking tracks around the fields and cycle parking; and
 - (c) Direction 6 - Vibrant Local Communities and Economies - local sports fields provide spaces for local recreation, fitness, health and social inclusion. The provision of new infrastructure expands the recreational offering, providing opportunities for the local community to interact; and
 - (d) Direction 9 - Sustainable Development, Renewal and Design - renewing local sports fields provides the City with an opportunity to adopt sustainable development techniques in the construction, maintenance and management of synthetic sports fields.

Organisational Impact

19. This programme will provide an increased number of playable hours for sports across the LGA, which may impact on the requirements for management of these facilities. To minimise this impact, the programme aims to co-locate new fields close to existing sports facilities wherever possible.
20. Synthetic fields require ongoing maintenance, which is of a different nature to the maintenance regime currently in operation with the City. Operating models for the ongoing maintenance of synthetic fields will be investigated.

Risks

21. The former uses of many of the fields highlighted for potential upgrades means some latent ground conditions such as contamination.
22. There are only currently five synthetic sports field construction firms in Australia. Should the City require stringent sustainable development techniques for the construction, maintenance and management of synthetic sports fields, it may limit the number of firms that tender for the work.

Social / Cultural / Community

23. Sport and recreation can play an important role in physical and mental health in the community, providing recreation, fitness, health and social inclusion. They also provide a unique focal point for local sports clubs and codes.
24. The safety of all sports facilities is a key consideration, and some local communities have expressed concerns at the prospect of natural grass being replaced by synthetics. Key concerns will be addressed during the consultation phase.

Environmental

25. A number of environmental considerations associated with the construction and ongoing maintenance of sports fields are being considered including:
 - (a) Capturing stormwater and run off for re-use;
 - (b) Materials choice - 'green engineering' principles could be adopted, focussing on the design, processes and products used;
 - (c) End of life disposal - new technology in Europe can now re-use the synthetic turf providing a cradle to grave solution for the synthetic turf; and
 - (d) Material safety – using natural products where possible.

Budget Implications

26. The City has allowed close to \$30 million in the Long Term Financial Plan for construction of synthetic sports fields (excluding land purchases and Gunyama Park). Funds to develop the concept design for Waterloo Oval and Turruwul Park have been allocated for this financial year.
27. It is proposed to redistribute the funds allocated to synthetic sports fields in the Long Term Financial Plan to align with the recommendations.
28. The availability of land to purchase is limited and is likely to be expensive. Investigations for suitable sites are ongoing.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

29. The estimated completion timing is outlined in the above table.

Public Consultation

30. Consultation with the local community and sporting groups is a key component of this project.
31. Questions from the local sporting groups are mostly likely to be around the compatibility of the sport and synthetics. It is possible that those sporting codes who insist on playing only on turf will need to be relocated to an alternate site.

32. All new synthetic fields will get accreditation/certification by relevant sporting codes to ensure the fields meet the respective codes' requirements.
33. For fields located within wider park settings it is anticipated there will be enquiries around the use of the field for passive recreation. These questions will be addressed in the concept design consultation.

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