



# CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

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MEETING DATE: APRIL 4, 2006

ITEM NUMBER:

**SUBJECT: ANNUAL REVIEW OF ATHLETIC FIELD/FACILITY USE AND ALLOCATION POLICY**

**DATE:** April 4, 2006

**FROM:** ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES/RECREATION DIVISION

**PRESENTATION BY:** JANA M. RANSOM, RECREATION MANAGER

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** JANA RANSOM, RECREATION MANAGER, 754-5654

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## RECOMMENDATION

Parks and Recreation Commission recommends that City Council receive this report and authorize staff to implement an Adult Allocation Formula for Group 6 organizations based upon the actual number of documented resident players expressed as a percentage of all residents playing in all Group 6 organizations as the premise for allocation of hours, and to add Harper School, Killybrooke Elementary School and Back Bay/Monte Vista School back into the fields that would be available for adult use on Sundays.

## BACKGROUND

The Field Use and Allocation Policy outlines procedures and allocation priority for the permitted use of City and Newport Mesa Unified School District athletic fields in the City of Costa Mesa. On May 23, 2001, the Parks and Recreation Commission approved the Athletic Field Use and Allocation Policy as recommended by a Council designated Community Field Use Committee. The document was subsequently approved by City Council on June 18, 2001. Council recommended that an annual review of the Athletic Field Use and Allocation Policy (Attachment A) be conducted by the Parks and Recreation Commission to assess the effectiveness of the policy and address areas of concern by staff as well as user groups.

The Field Use and Allocation Policy has provided the basis for fair and equitable treatment of user group requests and has been modified over the past five years as situations arise and conditions warrant. This document provides for site specific rules that have evolved after discussions with residents, user groups and the Newport Mesa Unified School District. City staff now takes into account field sustainability issues and of park and school capacities.

The City's Field Ambassadors monitor 68 fields and 8 facilities at 26 sites. There are over 40,000 hours of permitted field use. The Field Ambassadors work an average of 53 hours per week, mostly evenings and weekends, every week of the year, including holidays. During the 2005 calendar year, \$177,000 in revenue was collected for field rentals for approximately 5,400 hours of use by Group 3 - 6 organizations. Waived fees for Group 1 users equaled \$653,000 for approximately 32,600 hours. It is estimated that approximately \$107,500 was waived for use by NMUSD for approximately 3,300 hours.

In addition to the City's own programs, there are eight Group 1 organizations (Youth Groups with 90% Costa Mesa residents, are non-profits, who partner with the City, have open registration in which no child is turned away based upon their ability, and have an everyone plays philosophy). This group includes two groups that, due to significant Costa Mesa participation, were grandfathered in by City Council in 2001.

The School District's programs that take place after the City "has control" of school fields are considered Group 2.

There is one Group 3 organization, in which there are at least 51% Costa Mesa resident youth participants. This classification is also used for organizations with 90% Costa Mesa youth participants who do not meet all of the qualifications to become Group 1 organizations.

There are no adult resident groups, that is, adult groups with at least 90% resident participants, (Group 4 organizations).

The number of Group 5 organizations, or youth groups with 50% or fewer Costa Mesa resident participants and Group 6 organizations, or adult groups with 89% or fewer Costa Mesa residents, varies from year to year, but currently there are eight active youth groups (many of which are private schools) and five active adult groups.

On Wednesday, March 15, the Parks and Recreation Commission held a Study Session to review the Field Use and Allocation Policy. Staff went through the document section by section to give examples and provide background on how the policies came about. At this meeting, staff raised several issues that have arisen in the past twelve months and offered some thoughts to the Commission of policy changes that might be considered.

Based upon the discussions at the Study Session and comments from those in the audience, at the regular Commission meeting on March 22, staff recommended that the allocation of fields for Group 6 organizations be based upon the number of adult residents participating in each group expressed as a percentage of the total number of residents playing in all Group 6 organizations (see Attachment 2 for an example). The Parks and Recreation Commission also moved to recommend that Council add Back Bay/Monte Vista School, Killybrooke Elementary School and Harper School back into the schools that could be utilized for adult organizations on Sundays.

Several other alternatives were suggested by staff for Commission consideration, and are listed later in this report, that the Commission chose not to recommend.

## **ANALYSIS**

The Parks and Recreation Commission, City Council and citizens of Costa Mesa have all requested information about the adult participants who participate in Group 6 organizations. As Group 6 organizations are all considered non-resident whether they have as many as 89% resident players or no resident players, the groups are not required to provide any documentation relating to residency when requesting field time. To address this issue, the Commission recommends that City Council authorize staff to establish an adult allocation formula that requires all Adult User Groups to provide residency information prior to being assigned fields. The formula recommended will use the actual number of residents in each group expressed as a percentage of all residents playing in Group 6 organizations as the basis for determining the amount of field time each requesting Group 6 organization is to receive of the total hours available for their use when demand for fields by these groups outstrips the available supply.

The demand for lighted fields continues to grow, in part due to the fact that many youth sports team coaches are unable to get to practices much before 5:30 p.m. Staff continues to investigate options and to try to balance neighborhood concerns against field needs. The number of fields allocated to each Group 1 organization is based upon the total number of participants that are Costa Mesa residents, which are then divided by the Minimum Roster Size for each sport to determine the total number of resident teams in an organization. Allocation of field time is then determined by the overall percentage of resident teams in each organization measured against all resident teams in all Group 1 organizations. This formula presumes that there will be far more players on a roster for football than there are for soccer or baseball. Alternative #2 was suggested for Parks and Recreation Commission consideration to address equitability of allocation formula. Commission did not choose to recommend this alternative to City Council.

At the Parks and Recreation study session of March 15, 2006, it was suggested that field sports (soccer, lacrosse, football) be permitted to use the outfields of baseball and softball fields – especially those with lights currently being used by the City’s adult leagues. The Parks and Recreation Commission chose not to recommend that the Council reduce hours of use or seasons on these fields (TeWinkle Park and Lions Park fields) as suggested in Alternative #3.

The evolution of the “second season,” too, has increased field demand. Staff has found that while Group 1 field requests in the primary season can be largely fulfilled, the impact of fulfilling secondary season requests has resulted in increased neighborhood complaints (generally related to the fact that there is very little “peace and quiet” time when the fields go completely unused). Secondary seasons also affect field rest and renovation time scheduling, especially at The Farm, where winter maintenance takes the complex off line for eight weeks so that the fields can sustain use until the summer. The Parks and Recreation Commission chose not to recommend Alternatives #4, #5 or #6 to the Council.

Field sustainability continues to be a challenge, especially as NMUSD fields come back on line after the Measure A construction. Staff uses the following “rule of thumb” in scheduling City and District fields:

Elementary Schools: 25-30 hours per week afterschool and weekend use

Intermediate, High School and City: 35-40 hours per week afterschool and weekends,  
40-45 hours per week during school breaks and summer

The Commission did not recommend to Council the implementation of either Alternative #7 or #8 to constrain use for sustainability.

The question of equalization of subsidies arose last year when one of the Group 1 organizations indicated that their parent organization required that each participant practice a certain number of hours each week between games. This requirement led to the group needing more hours than the City’s allocation formula called for that group to receive. Too, some organizations’ playing seasons last longer than others, so the amount of game and practice time per team varies. It is also noted that some groups allocate more practice time and game time than other groups. The Parks and Recreation Commission did not recommend the establishment of a subsidy baseline per Alternative #9.

And finally, with the limitation of adult use to certain specified fields, the demand for fields among Group 6 users has resulted in some allocation difficulties. The Parks and Recreation Commission did recommend that Council consider adding sites back into the scheduling mix for adults. Specifically, the Commission recommends the Council add Back Bay/Monte Vista School, Harper School and Killybrooke Elementary School back into the fields available for adult use on Sundays. These fields will be allocated by request if they have not already been previously permitted to their maximum (for sustainability) Monday through Saturday.

## **FISCAL REVIEW**

The recommendation and alternatives below will have no impact on revenue or expenditures, with the following exceptions if Council selects them:

- Alternative #3 could result in lower revenue should the City not hold adult softball leagues in October and November;
- Additional revenue could result should Council increase the number of fields available for use by adults on Sunday. Actual amount is not known at this time. Revenue loss from the initial reduction was projected to be about \$70,000. Having an additional eight hours of adult use field time per week will bring in approximately \$10,000 (based upon 49 weeks rental).

## **LEGAL REVIEW**

The recommendations and alternatives below require no legal review.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

- 1) Make no changes to the current Field Use and Allocation Policy.
- 2) Base allocation formula for Group 1 organizations upon the actual number of residents in each organization expressed as a percentage of all residents playing in Group 1 organizations to determine hours allocation.
- 3) Do not hold City adult softball leagues in the October or November.
- 4) Limit Group 1 organizations' secondary season requests to a percentage of primary season use (i.e., 25%).
- 5) Limit Group 1 organizations' secondary season requests to specific time frames (i.e., 14 weeks).
- 6) Charge Group 1 organizations a small fee for secondary season use (disincentive for use/more efficient field requests).
- 7) Limit field use in the summer to playoffs, tournaments or sports camps (no leagues).
- 8) Rest all school fields, baseball/softball and utility fields, from July 1 through August 15.
- 9) Provide field space to Group 1 organizations based upon one practice and one game per week, for an average of three to five hours per resident per week, charging for any additional time needed.

## CONCLUSION

Staff feels that the existing Field Use and Allocation policy works, in large measure. With the implementation of site restrictions for adult use, and the more critical oversight of field users by the community, Commission and Council, the Parks and Recreation Commission recommends that City Council authorize staff to implement an Adult Allocation Formula for Group 6 organizations based upon the actual number of documented resident players expressed as a percentage of all residents playing in all Group 6 organizations as premise for allocation of hours, and to add Harper School, Killybrooke Elementary School and Back Bay/Monte Vista School back into the fields that would be available for adult use on Sundays.

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**JANA M. RANSOM**  
Recreation Manager

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**STEPHEN N. MANDOKI**  
Administrative Services Director

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**MARK PUCKETT**  
Director of Finance

Attachments: 1) [Field Use and Allocation Policy](#)  
2) [Adult Allocation Formula](#)