



Diamond Sports Facility Study

March 2025



Minneapolis
Park & Recreation Board



Credits



Technical Advisory Committee

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board appreciates the public members of a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) formed to offer insights and direction to this study. Their time and energy were foundational to the directions embodied in this study.

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Executive Summary

Like many similar studies of facilities in the Minneapolis park system, this one is guided by Technical Advisory Committee comprised of volunteers associated with baseball and softball as well as staff from the Recreation and Environmental Stewardship Divisions of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB), each of whom offered key directions supporting an understanding of current conditions related to the sports and the supporting facilities. Importantly, their contributions extended into some of the core practices of the MPRB, especially the reservations systems used to assign facilities teams or organizations.

Baseball and softball, collectively in this study referenced as “diamond sports,” have been core recreation features of the MPRB for decades. At the same time, sports such as football, soccer, lacrosse, and rugby (“field sports”) have grown in popularity, causing a need to share vital spaces in the MPRB park system needed for each sport. While advocates for diamond sports desire additional park space to support their activities, this study is directed to methods of upgrading facilities with the goal of improving physical conditions for play at all levels. Attention is directed to maintenance and care of diamond sports facilities, recognizing current limitations in operating and care for those facilities resulting from staffing shortage, as well as

reservations methods used by diamond sports teams and organizations to secure fields for practices and games.

The study offers direction for a broad range of initiatives surrounding diamond sports but its real import is its capacity to guide and, especially, initiate aligned change. Greater consistency among field types allows teams and organizations using diamond sports facilities to move between facilities with essentially the same expectations for configurations, features, and conditions.

Advancement requires an assignment of responsibility and a timeline for action, requiring support of the Board of Commissioners through allocation of adequate staffing to accomplish a goal or initiative and, often, funding to support a capital or rehabilitation project. To the extent partnerships can be established or funds gained through grants or other contributions, the evolution of facilities to meet this study’s goal will be advanced more quickly.

While this study offers direction for diamond sports, it will be important to pair its findings with upcoming studies focused on field sports. Court sports and winter sports will also be studied but they bear less on conditions supporting diamond sports than do the field sports.



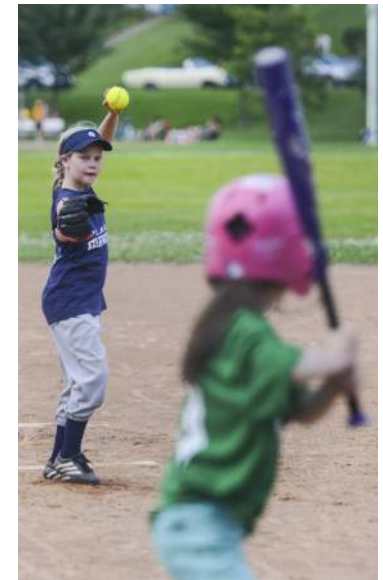
1.0 Purpose

More than 400 youth teams participated in diamond sports on facilities owned by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board in 2023. For adults playing softball and baseball, the number of teams grows to at least 800. Players participate in youth leagues for ages six and younger to one softball league where participants are in their 80s and 90s. Softball and baseball are played at facilities of highly varied quality across the Minneapolis park system. While national trends for diamond sports appear inconclusive, those choosing to participate in diamond sports need facilities aligned with varying skill levels and a quality diamond sport experience every time they step onto an MPRB field.

MPRB park users have noted the condition of many fields do not support a great experience for players--at all levels of competition and especially relative to suburban fields. Accessing fields has been noted as a concern, with some entities seemingly dominating field use at the exclusion of less organized user groups. There also remains a concern, noted by some diamond sports advocates after several service area plans were adopted, that the quantity of fields supporting diamond sports is less than required to support play in the Minneapolis park system. In fact, it's likely that facilities supportive of all sports is inadequate—there simply isn't space sufficient to accommodate all needs.

In response, the Board of Commissioners directed the conduct a study of those concerns with the goal of elevating the conditions for play at all levels. That work was guided by a volunteer Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and staff from various units of the MPRB who met over a period of about ten months to establish guidance. The TAC felt strongly that many areas of its work—especially the designation of a fields supporting high school girls softball—should be accompanied by actions leading to real change. This point was amplified by a resolution from the Board of Commissioners framing a schedule for implementation of four to six fields supporting high school girls softball.

The narrative of this document extends further than the facilities supporting diamond sports. The TAC directed significant time to understanding the methods of accessing and scheduling available fields. Situations that occurred at about the same time as this study might have precipitated that part of the TAC's dialog, but it's noteworthy that the process revealed scheduling of fields and understanding of field availability to be somewhat of a mystery, which is antithetical to the transparency goals of the MPRB. To that end, this document advocates for more public-facing tools for field users and staff that can be applied to seasonal and ad hoc field use and scheduling.



TAC members were quite insistent that advancing conditions for the play of diamond sports is not the sole responsibility of the MPRB. As TAC members were representative of the organizations using diamond sports facilities, they encouraged the MPRB to consider them as partners—not just for programming but possibly for funding and care of the facilities. The document begins to address some of those opportunities, which might only be expected to expand as those relationships mature.

This document may not resolve every concern related to diamond sports in the MPRB system. Guidance is offered through a series of principles and goals, which are eventually

linked to the actions noted in the document. It's important that those principles and goals were derived from TAC input (with documentation to the initial TAC comments supporting each principle or goal), not from MPRB staff or elected leadership. In defining those statements from the TAC as overall guidance, the MPRB is wholly aligned with their importance in framing potential courses of action even beyond what is contained in this document. This document also defines standards for fields in terms of class, field sizing, and field features addressing a wide range of play and skill level. It addresses a charge from the Board of Commissioners to increase the number of fields appropriate for high school girls softball, with three fields noted for improvements with more to follow.

This plan for diamond sports aligns with the following goals of Parks for All, the MPRB 2021-2036 Comprehensive Plan, each of which might be addressed in various parts of the plan's narrative:

- Goal 1: Foster belonging and equity
- Goal 3: Provide core services with care
- Goal 4: Work from our strengths and determine our role in partnerships
- Goal 7: Connect through communications and technology
- Goal 9: Operate a financially sustainable enterprise



2.0 Charge

The Board of Commissioners approved Resolution 2022-341 on December 7, 2022 as the direction for the study of athletic facilities in the MPRB system. As part of the direction from commissioners, it was determined that diamond sports facilities would be the first to be considered. Specific directions for the work were framed in a proposal requested of staff from commissioners, which included several parameters offering focus for the studies. The Board-accepted proposal offered a goal and two charges, which were expected to become part of the direction to a group of public members selected to assist in guiding the work of each study (which is the Technical Advisory Committee or TAC):

- Goal: To establish facilities for athletic pursuits providing high-level experiences for users regardless of ability.
- Charge: To engage separate Advisory Committees to develop directions for improving athletic facilities (diamond sports, athletic field sports, court sports, and winter sports) in the Minneapolis park system.
- Charge: To develop facility plans for Diamond



Sports, Athletic Field Sports, Courts Sports, and Winter Recreation. The plans shall provide guidance relative to classification of existing facilities according to standards developed as a part of the planning process. The study process shall consider and recommend standards for access and use, permits for recreation use, standards for care for each type, distribution of fa-

cilities (as a confirmation of distribution established in Service Area Master Plans), enhancement or expansion of facilities, and other factors relevant to increasing the use and quality of experience for various athletic facilities in the MPRB system. Articulation of the various plans will be aligned with previously created Skate Park Activity Plan and Urban Agriculture Plan.

It is noted the Board of Commissioners, in approving staff's proposal for the work, agreed the work should not encompass changes to already approved long-range plans. Because those plans were adopted by the Board, each with lengthy public input processes, it would be inconsistent with the plans and the MPRB's community engagement policy to undo an existing approved plan without similar input from the community served by each adopted park plan.



3.0 Trends

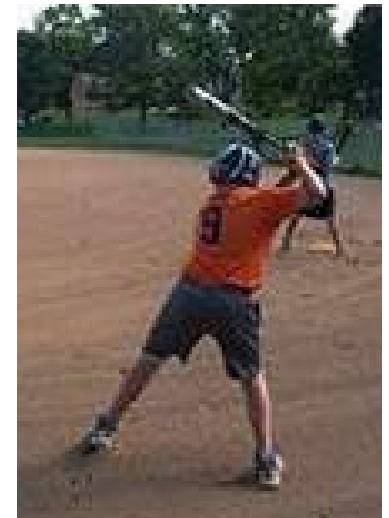
TAC members are adamant that participation in diamond sports is increasing and are quite willing to bring statistics to support their position. MPRB staff heard the same during most of the service area planning processes (it was not raised as a concern in relation to the downtown service area). This process did not have resources to conduct an intensive review of diamond sports participation, however some information was fairly easy to discern from simple searches for information supporting an increase in youth participation in diamond sports:

Overall U.S. youth participation in baseball in 2022 rebounded to 15.5 million, according to the Sports and Fitness Industry Association, about equal with the 2017 level. Casual participation, while up 7% to 7.91 million in 2022, hasn't quite returned to pre-pandemic levels.¹

While no one is saying the erstwhile national pastime is returning to its glory years, Major League Baseball is encouraged that kids are returning to baseball and sticking with it. Between 2013 and 2018, the number of U.S. kids playing baseball and softball combined increased by nearly 3 million, according to annual surveys by the Sports Fitness & Industry Association. During that same period, participation in soccer and football declined and basketball increased only slightly.²

Baseball and softball had nearly 25 million combined participants last year, more than any team sport in the United States, Major League Baseball announced during its quarterly Owners Meetings on Thursday.³

Like the process of finding basic statistics supporting a resurgence of youth participation in diamond sports, it was easy to find information to the contrary:



¹ www.FrontOfficeSports. MLB Little League Classic Boosts Youth Development As Part Of \$3.9B Deal (August 18, 2023). (<https://frontofficeports.com/mlb-little-league-classic-boosts-youth-development-as-part-of-3-9b-deal/#:~:text=Overall%20U.S.%20youth%20participation%20in,returned%20to%20pre%2Dpandemic%20levels>). Retrieved 15 October 2023.

² www.USAToday.com. Put Me In, Coach: Youth baseball participation on the rise (August 23, 2019). <https://www.usatoday.com/story/sports/mlb/2019/08/23/put-me-in-coach-youth-baseball-participation-on-the-rise/40002827/>. Retrieved 15 October 2023.

³ www.MLB.com. Baseball/softball most participated team sport: Play Ball contributing to rise in youth involvement (May 18, 2017). <https://www.mlb.com/news/baseball-softball-most-participated-team-sport-c230956600>. Retrieved 15 October 2023.



If you look at baseball at the youth level, Little League once reigned supreme. The national program was once the clear leader of youth sport participation in America. Despite this, these numbers have declined steadily in the past years. According to a study conducted by Aspen Institute, the number of children aged 13-17 who regularly played baseball dropped down 16.8% between 2019-2020.⁴

Roughly 15.6 million people above the age of six years old participated in that sport at least once in 2021. This figure constitutes the third consecutive decline recorded in the North American country.⁵

Baseball continues to be one of the most popular youth sports in North America. While baseball participation rates increased from 2018-2019, from 2019-2020 numbers dropped.

When looking specifically at data published by the Aspen Institute for kids ages 6-12 years-old, the number of kids playing baseball in 2019 was 14.4% and in 2020, 12.1%. These numbers show -15.2% difference.

Youth athletes ranging from 13-17 years-old playing baseball also dropped between 2019 to 2020. In 2019, the participation rate was 10.4% vs. 2020 at 8.7%.⁶

These references suggest the trends are, perhaps, a matter of national debate. Some things might be clear, however, when looking particular at youth in Minneapolis—and probably many other places:

- Youth have many options for their recreation and non-school time;
- Some youth prefer sports with more constant activity, like basketball and lacrosse;
- There is a rise of other sports across the country and in Minneapolis, offering youth more options for participation and often during the same season; and
- Increasing participation rates in diamond sports might be matched by participation in other sports that require space in the Minneapolis park system, rendering the MPRB incapable of responding unilaterally to the needs across all sports.

- 4 [www.maldenblueandgold.com. Is Baseball Dying in America? \(January 11, 2023\).](https://www.maldenblueandgold.com/2023/01/is-baseball-dying-in-america/#:~:text=The%20national%20program%20was%20once,16.8%25%20between%202019%2D2020) <https://www.maldenblueandgold.com/2023/01/is-baseball-dying-in-america/#:~:text=The%20national%20program%20was%20once,16.8%25%20between%202019%2D2020>. Retrieved 15 October 2023.
- 5 [www.statista.com. Baseball Participation in the U.S. 2010-2021 \(June 9, 2023\).](https://www.statista.com/statistics/191626/participants-in-baseball-in-the-us-since-2006/) <https://www.statista.com/statistics/191626/participants-in-baseball-in-the-us-since-2006/>. Retrieved 15 October 2023.
- 6 [www.TeamSnap.com. Baseball By The Numbers: Understanding The Youth Baseball Landscape \(April 14, 2022\).](https://www.teamsnap.com/blog/general-sports/baseball-by-the-numbers) <https://www.teamsnap.com/blog/general-sports/baseball-by-the-numbers>. Retrieved 15 October 2023.



Information from the MPRB, drawn from program participation rates, suggests great interest in diamond sports—more than 1200 youth and adult teams playing in Minneapolis. But there is also a rise in participation in other youth sports. It's highly important that this study is not directed to determining the popularity of diamond sports but to the capacity for the MPRB to enhance the experience of play at all levels for those choosing to participate in diamond sports.

As the MPRB strives to increase the quality of play on fields, it might result in fewer fields where diamond sports and field sports are played at varying times of the year. Long-range plans for several parks indicate an eventual focus for diamond sports or field sports, suggesting that the number of fields supporting each type of play are being reduced.

Elevating play through the use of combined fields may not be a very good answer as the quality of play conditions on those field types is generally poor when compared to single sport fields. A better but more difficult solution would be to expand the number of fields through acquisition of additional parkland, a proposition this report might support but the study did not pursue.

TAC members indicate a trend in field configuration as well as other parameters addressed in this study. Even prior to the initiation of the TAC, baseball enthusiasts have advocated for the MPRB to implement a field configuration referred to as a “pinwheel,” wherein fields are arranged around a central point with outfields furthest from that point. Often, a concessions building is located in the central area and advocates support the potential for spectator

interaction in that same area. Further, the arrangement seems to be favored for competitions and tournaments. For certain, pinwheel configurations are present across the Twin Cities, often in suburbs where ample space is available to support single sport facilities.

The potential for a pinwheel configuration was addressed during the preparation of service area master plans. At Armatage Park, baseball advocates encouraged such a configuration. The Community Advisory Committee opted for a configuration as demonstrated in the plan approved by the Board of Commissioners. While the continued advocacy is appreciated, this study is founded in parameters accepted by the Board of Commissioners, including the following:

In pursuit of the Athletics Facilities Studies, it must be clear that the distribution and configuration of certain athletic facilities—particularly relative to diamond sports, field sports, and tennis and basketball courts—have been defined in several service area master plans which have been adopted by the Board of Commissioners. Therefore, the Athletic Facilities Studies will not address distribution of facility types

within a service area, or location or configuration within individual parks.⁷

Pinwheel configurations remain strongly supported by diamond sports advocates. While this study directs attentions to enhancements aimed at the quality for play, it does not wholly set aside the notion that a pinwheel might find a place in the Minneapolis park system. Parameters supporting a pinwheel configuration are addressed in Appendix 11.3. Still, there are few parks in the neighborhood park system where a pinwheel might work, and an introduction of diamond sports into the regional park system is not supported by any long-range regional park plan. In fact, the Metropolitan Council directs active recreation to local (neighborhood) parks in its policy.⁸

7 “Parameters supporting the Athletics Facilities Study” as presented to the Board of Commissioners as a part of Resolution 2022-341, which was approved and establishes direction for this study.

8 The Metropolitan Council distinguishes the focus and use of regional and parks as follows: The Regional Parks System primarily consists of lands located in high-quality natural resource settings that are contiguous to lakes, rivers, or other water bodies. Natural resource restoration and protection is a key objective. Local recreational open space facilities are an important component of the overall outdoor recreation system in the region. Local parks are often more intensely developed than regional parks and provide facilities for active recreation such as playgrounds, athletic fields, sport courts, and aquatic centers. Information access from <https://metro council.org/Handbook/Plan-Elements/Parks.aspx>, 16 June 2024.

4.0 Principles and Goals

Using TAC input from early conversations, a series of Principles and Goals were drafted as touchstones for the continuing work toward the goal of elevating the experience on diamond sports facilities for players at all skill levels. The principles are intended as broad statements of intention, each of which is supported by goals, which in turn are supported by specific actions (tasks or strategies), each with an assignment of responsibility and a timeline for implementation and articulated later in this report.

PRINCIPLES

Facilities

Fields will be created and maintained to be safe and meet the competitive needs of players at varying capabilities.

The public's understanding of field use and scheduling will be supported by a comprehensive and current inventory of locations and features/amenities.

Scheduling

The process of scheduling fields and understanding their condition will be transparent and easily accessible to the public.



Partnership

The MPRB and Minneapolis Public Schools will strive to define and support facilities aligned with each of Minneapolis' high school teams.

Evolution of fields in the Minneapolis park system toward their ideal condi-

tion by classification will result from partnerships and not through the efforts of the MPRB on its own.

Operations

Optimal conditions for play will be achieved in association with teams and will recognize the need for staffing appropriate to establish competition conditions.

Fees

Rental of fields in the Minneapolis park system will recognize market conditions but strive to include the costs of operations and programming performed by the Park Board.

The translation of principles to goals relied on TAC input. While not always a direct representation of statements offered, the goal statements reflect the broader intentions of the TAC as they combine language and intention of individual TAC members to round out the Principles.

While not initially included in the input offered by TAC members, the list of goals has been expanded to address opportunities for field configurations that are more supportive of tournament play. Importantly, this list is derived and supported by input from the TAC; staff did not add its intentions or needs.

Goals should be applied as decisions are made relative to programming or physical improvements of diamond sports facilities. They're intended as a means of ensuring consistent change as improvements are made.



GOALS

1 FACILITIES

- 1.a Classify and publish a comprehensive list of fields according to use and including sizes, features/amenities, illumination, and maintenance regime for each listed field.
- 1.b Support skills development through the provision of appropriate features/amenities for varying levels of competition and experience.
- 1.c Establish fields for competition and playability at varying levels with player safety as the primary factor.
- 1.d Provide for consistently improved field conditions.
- 1.e Seek opportunities for field configurations supportive of tournament play where physical, program, and policy effects on any park are limited by the introduction of the new configuration.

2 SCHEDULING

- 2.a Identify field use and conditions through a reliable, public-facing, and interactive tool demonstrating scheduling, maintenance and conditions, and game preparation.
- 2.b Optimize scheduling and use of fields according to documented and publicly accessible procedures for registration and play.

3 PARTNERING

- 3.a Create opportunities for maintenance to be performed by or under the direction of qualified individuals.
- 3.b Establish partnerships aimed at elevating the experience of play for all field users.

4 COMMUNICATIONS

- 4.a Provide timely and accessible information relating to the use and scheduling of fields as well as methods of coordinating with field user groups to define expanded opportunities for partnering.

5 FEES AND COSTS

- 5.a Establish a basis for field use and rentals encompassing the reasonable costs of managing a system of fields.



5.0 Use and Scheduling

5.1 Conditions

While those organizations with a long-term relationship with the MPRB have come to understand the process of reserving fields, newcomers most often find it confusing and difficult. The TAC spent nearly an entire meeting discussing the operational limitations of the current system, which by any measure would seem antiquated. Today, the MPRB's Recreation staff take calls, searching through a three-ring binder filled with field layouts and paper schedules to accommodate a request. Once a field and time is secured, the need for any preparation is communicated to MPRB's Asset Management staff to ensure the proper set up for a particular league or a game. For those familiar with the process, it seems to work—perhaps more by luck than intention, and certainly more as a result familiarity with staff. TAC members were clear that the process needs to be clearer and, especially, more transparent.

In fact, the MPRB follows a practice for assigning fields aligned with the organization's policy. MPRB programs have first option on fields, followed by those sports under the Minneapolis Public Schools. Other organizations with past field relationships are next, with those with new relationship are last in the reservation process.



TAC members also noted a desire for fields in the neighborhood of programs from the Recreation Centers. While the current practice doesn't necessarily align, the MPRB might make certain modifications to policy aimed to better accommodate this desire.

There wasn't necessarily an objection to the priority as much as a lack of understanding about the procedure



and timelines. It was also clear that it is only through long-time practice that some organizations gained field times; representatives of some organizations fail to meet the time thresholds of registration periods but rather than losing their fields, MPRB staff know well enough to make the proper reservations. Of course, that leaves much to chance and the very real possibility of some long-term field users being left without field resources. Again, clarity was requested—this time along with the MPRB’s request for timely responses.

Field use by Minneapolis Public Schools athletics programs was point of much discussion, especially relative to timing of reservations, interruptions resulting from games extending past reservation periods, and the lack of

fields supporting competition for girls at the high school level. MPRB practice for game reservations, in particular, should be reviewed to limit the potential for overlapping field use by reserving parties. While there are limits to the extents reservations can be “pushed back” because of lack of lighting or potential lateness of resulting reservation times, the MPRB should be looking at ways to limit overlaps resulting from competition.

Fields supporting play are sometimes reserved through the MPRB but are then distributed outside of MPRB policies, essentially limiting use by unaffiliated groups. This practice may be more prevalent in non-diamond sports but it should be reviewed across the MPRB to ensure equal access to the limited sports facilities available.

5.2 Recommendations

Discussions with the TAC made obvious the need for a more intuitive and public-facing method of reserving fields, gaining an understanding of field conditions, and defining alternative field locations when necessary. While not necessarily simple, processes that employ technology might be employed to meet the TAC’s interest. If we think of an online reservation system for a restaurant, the process of making a reservation through an online portal, gaining a confirmation via return email or text, and then gaining a notification when your table is ready is a ready model. In fact, even during the course of this study advances have been made by MPRB staff that might allow a path for that

type of system to be implemented with testing in 2025 or 2026, with supportive funding, of course.

While organizations participating in the reservations and scheduling process have gained experience necessary to meet their needs, new organizations have a more difficult time. The process might be exacerbated by field reservation practices allowing an entity to dominate a field for long periods of a season of play. TAC members noted the need for limiting the number of consecutive reservations for certain groups, but the MPRB has not yet framed a complete set of practices around a new reservations system. It's clear that continued MPRB staff participation in the reservation process is key to limit abuses, even with practices intended to set boundaries on extended or expansive reservations. With that perspective, the notion of submitting an application for field use online makes sense but confirmation aligning with good practices only occurs through staff review.

A field reservation system has utility beyond those organizations responsible for diamond sports play. With a more technologically driven system, MPRB staff responsible for the care of fields and their preparation for games will have the most up-to-date information with them on-site, with the capacity for noting their operations have been completed with automatic notification to the reserving party. Perhaps just as important, if conditions limit the ability for use of a field, resulting, for instance, from wet conditions that would render the field unsafe for play or that might damage the field, staff could “knock out” that



field from a reservation, with notifications being made to scheduling staff so that an alternative field could be readily identified for the original reserving user.

Practices that address overlapping use due to competition need to be framed and made known. MPRB staff note that in parks where staff is on site when those overlaps occur result in fewer issues for subsequent users, suggesting that intervention by staff works and that at least some staff with authority should be on site to limit bad interactions between groups using fields. This recommendation likely requires the addition of staff or the expansion of hours for current staff with field authority responsibilities.

Some groups may dominate field reservations nearly to the exclusion of unaffiliated groups or teams. While noted more for other sports, a full review of the equity of field reservations and assignments coupled with a rigorous review of revenues lost by the MPRB should be pursued.

5.3 Actions

To address concerns and capture opportunities identified in this study, the actions in the chart below are recommended for implementation. Where a cost is indicated, a budget allocation by the Board of Commissioners may be necessary to advance an action.

<i>Responsible party</i>	<i>Completion</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>Potential partners</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Use and Scheduling ACTION 1.1: Update reservation methods for Minneapolis Public Schools to ensure adherence to seasonal deadlines				
MPRB Recreation	Q1 2026	Staff time required to achieve goal; possible review by Board of Commissioners	Minneapolis Public Schools (athletic directors)	
Use and Scheduling ACTION 1.2: Update reservation methods to make practices more generally known and ensure equitable access to fields				
MPRB Recreation, MPRB ITS	Q1 2027	Staff time required; possible review by Board of Commissioners		Addressing long-standing field use practices was not a particular focus of this work; more intense review from an equity perspective may be merited.
Use and Scheduling ACTION 1.3: Implement a public-facing online field reservation tool with capacity for notification of acceptance of reservation and readiness of fields				
MPRB Recreation, MPRB Data Insights, MPRB Information Technology	"Beta" Q2 2026, operational Q1 2027	Presumed addition to ActiveNet; interface with Asset Management relative to field care and game setup; staff time required.	Two or so organizations to serve as "Beta" testers (MYBA and 612 have volunteered to assist in the Beta)	

Use and Scheduling | ACTION 1.4: **Address overlapping of field use, particularly for games, to avoid disputes over timing**

MPRB Recreation	Q2 2026	Staffing additions to “manage” game time field use issues is critical; TAC members noted that disputes are readily addressed by staff when they are present.
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Use and Scheduling | ACTION 1.5: **Accommodate field use that is more aligned with neighborhood recreation center programming**

MPRB Recreation	Q2 2026	Requires an orientation to MPRB programming from recreation centers and a focus on primary use of fields supporting MPRB programs.	A focus on recreation center based programming may result in displacement of some long-standing relationships with diamond sports groups.
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Use and Scheduling | ACTION 1.6: **Move scheduling of fields wholly to MPRB Recreation instead of individual recreation centers**

MPRB Recreation	Q1 2026	Review staffing needs related to centralized scheduling
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Use and Scheduling | ACTION 1.7: **Review field rental costs to gain alignment with market and actual costs of operations**

MPRB Recreation; MPRB Finance	Q3 2026	MPRB staff time
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6.0 Field Classes

6.1 Conditions

The MPRB uses a system to define types of fields based on “tiers,” with the lower numbered tiers (Tier 1 and Tier 2) being better quality fields, or higher cost fields, or fields with a specified and more intensive maintenance regime. While there might be some inherent connection across those factors, it’s difficult for field users to fully understand what they might be reserving for use. Mix into this the idea that some fields in the MPRB system are “premier” only makes discernment of fields more difficult. There is no consistent definition for each tier because staff apply the tier numbers to their tasks related to the field. Finally, there is little overall consistency in the components that make up fields within each tier.

Typically, fields receiving the greatest attention to their maintenance are referred to as Tier 1 Fields. They’re mowed more often, with a standard based on the length of the grass blade, and they receive remedial care at a far higher level than other fields. On the other end of the spectrum, Tier 4 Fields are mowed when other parts of a park are mowed, which is basically a ten-day or longer mowing cycle. Fields at this tier receive far less attention in terms of irrigation (which would typically be non-existent), weed treatments,

aeration, topdressing, and other actions intended to improve field turf.

When the highest-level field are referred to as “premier” or “semi-premier,” it’s even more difficult to understand the type of field obtained through a reservation—except that





one could reasonably assume a premier field is intended for competition at the higher level of what is seen in diamond sports programs in Minneapolis parks. Within those terms there might be different components comprising the field—one Premier field might have covered “dugouts” while others have team benches with no coverings for teams. Establishing consistency—regardless of their assigned label—seems key. In fact, any consistencies that might exist today are likely happenstance because there is no overall field guide. It might be aspirational at first, but elevation of play at all levels suggests that the same field features and amenities are available at all fields within the same tier.

6.2 Recommendations

The MPRB and diamond sports users would benefit from a more consistent method of referencing field types, maintenance regimes, and costs of use. At the outset, it’s useful to break with the “tier” terminology as it will, perhaps, continue to carry existing connotations. Fields organized by “class” might reset expectations and allow a deeper understanding of the nature of each field. In this way, “class” would mean those fields having similar character, attributes, or features, along with a similar level of care demonstrated within the class. Perhaps eventually, it will be expected that fields within each class can be expected to hold similar qualities for play.

MPRB diamond sports facilities will be differentiated by several factors, each aligned with a specified Field Class, based on:

- The level of competition and skills of the players anticipated for the field;
- The maintenance regime applied to the field;
- The components of the field supporting the play of diamond sports; and
- The accessibility of the field for use.

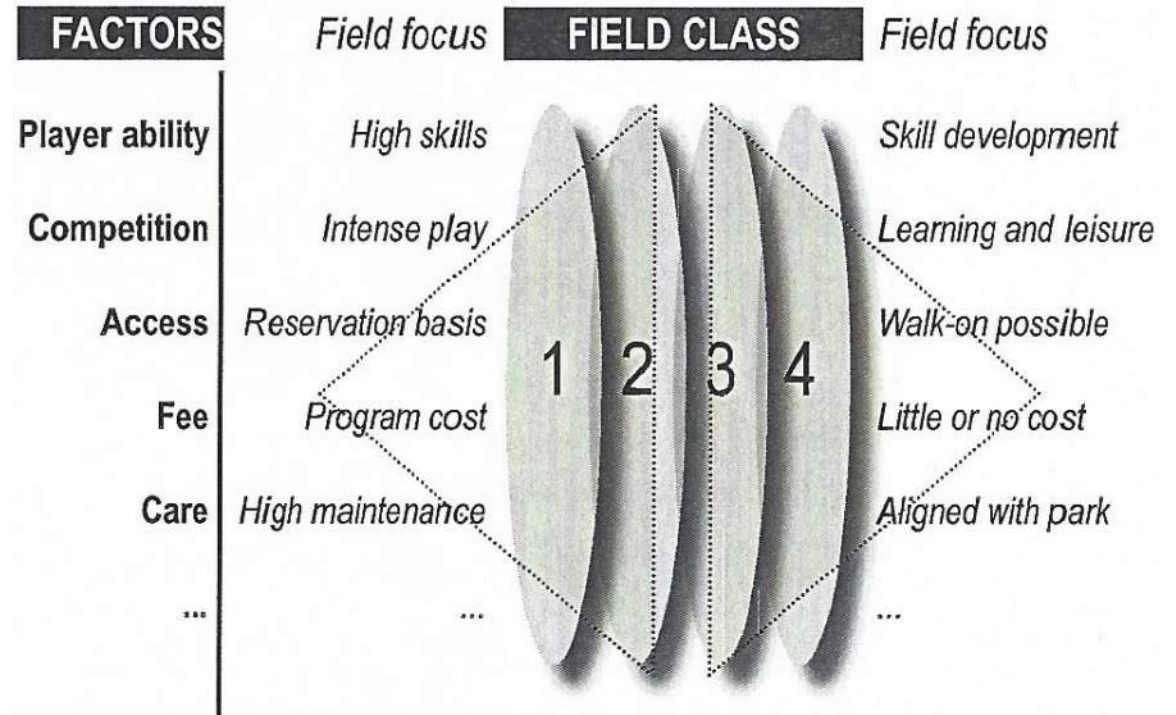
Distribution of fields, especially those oriented to higher levels of play is key. Ultimately, programs focused on skill development would occur on fields within neighborhoods

and programs supporting more intensive play and competition would occur less frequently in the system but would certainly occur in each service area (excepting the Downtown service area, which does not support well the notion of diamond sports facilities).

The integration of these factors into a single matrix aids users as they reserve fields appropriate to their team's or organization's needs. It also directs staff to a single resource supporting programming and operations of the field.

In addition to field classes, it's important that there be an appropriate number of fields in the MPRB system. The count of each type needs to be responsive to play and aligned with key dimensional requirements:

Level of play	Base distances	Outfield distance
10U 12U Girls Fastpitch	60 feet	200 to 220 feet
13U Adult Softball	75 feet	275 to 300 feet
Boys Baseball	90 feet	300 feet



6.3 Actions

To address concerns and capture opportunities identified in this study, the following actions are recommended for implementation. Where a cost is indicated, a budget allocation by the Board of Commissioners may be necessary to advance an action.

<i>Responsible party</i>	<i>Completion</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>Potential partners</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Field Classes ACTION 2.1: Establish field classes with associated field quality and maintenance procedures				
MPRB Recreation; MPRB Asset Management; MPRB Strategic Planning (budget development)	Q1 2025 using NPP20 Field Rehabilitation category coupled, where practicable and supported through concept plan approval, with NPP20 capital funding	Staff time required to achieve goal; possible review by Board of Commissioners; this action will require additional funding to establish assets and initiate increased maintenance regimes at Class 1 and Class 2 fields	Minneapolis Public Schools (athletic directors)	
Field Classes ACTION 2.2: Create partnerships for some aspects of field maintenance (infield dragging, mound and batter's box packing)				
MPRB Recreation	Q1 2026	Staff time required to establish training program; possible review by Board of Commissioners; costs of equipment, including a field storage box and hand tools, might be \$2500 per park	Diamond sports groups would be the logical trainees; financial support to acquire required tools may also come from diamond sports groups.	This action may require accommodation in MPRB's collective bargaining agreements.

Field Classes | ACTION 2.3: Review maintenance regimes for each field class and ensure maintenance staff have resources sufficient to support those maintenance regimes

MPRB Asset Management Q1 2025

MPRB staff time to assess regime outlined in this report against current capacity and then project needed resources to achieve stated maintenance regimes; staff should also provide the annual costs of maintaining fields based on time and materials directed to each field type .

The work associated with this action is intended to deliver higher levels of maintenance balanced with costs acceptable to the Board of Commissioners.

Field Classes | ACTION 2.4: Review costs of play at each field type, moving toward full reimbursement for reserved fields

MPRB Recreation, MPRB Asset Management, MPRB Finance Q3 2026

MPRB staff time will be required to fully assess these costs

An increase in use fees might be considered to be incremental with an initial increase not occurring immediately.





7.0 Field Count and Distribution

7.1 Conditions

Field distribution and configuration in MPRB parks are guided by long-range plans created for each of five service areas in the system. Each plan was created with significant public input and guided by a volunteer Community Advisory Committee, with eventual adoption by the Board of Commissioners. The plans align park assets with often limited space and financial resources, address programming parameters, accommodate needs of existing and new populations, and distribute park assets within a service area rather than replicating assets in every park. Such is the case for diamond sports, where there is limited space to meet the desires of all potential users and where other field sports must be accommodated in the same space. Layered into the shortage is the expanded seasons played by many sports, including diamond sports; where baseball and softball were once focused on spring and summer, “fall ball” is increasingly common and competing with football, soccer, and lacrosse.

Suggestions by the TAC of deficit of diamond sports facilities in the Minneapolis park system might be true but expansion of facilities would impact other field sports and park assets. The MPRB has identified a quantity of

diamond sports, but it probably overcounts reality: fields were counted regardless of their ability to be fully used. Parks with four overlapping diamond sports outfields have been noted as a park with four diamond sports fields, but only two can be reasonably used for a diamond sport activity at any one time. In response, the long-range plans identified fields where full use could be achieved, and there was a corresponding reduction in fields. Four small diamonds became two small diamonds—but actual usage was unchanged. Therefore, the long-range plans remain the MPRB’s best guide to the distribution and balance of a wide range of activities, including diamond sports.

If acreage were identified for additional parkland in Minneapolis, the Board of Commissioners could explore the potential for an expansion of the system. However, new parkland might be sought for purposes other than diamond or field sports, especially as single-purpose recreation activity spaces would seem difficult to propose (as opposed to general use field areas which might accommodate any number of sports on an ad hoc basis). Still, there are parks with more of singular focus occurs and expansion might be more possible (Neiman Fields and Xcel Field). Beyond that, acreage in the city for new parks is limited, as are the funds necessary to acquire them.



Other possible routes to expanding opportunities for diamond sports include collaboration with other entities with available land that might otherwise lay fallow during sports seasons. TAC members encouraged stronger collaboration with Minneapolis Public Schools so that its limited facilities might be used beyond the school year. This would require agreements for scheduling and operations, which might mirror several “shared site” agreements between Minneapolis Public Schools and the MPRB (typically related to playgrounds and field space). There is no quantification of those potential field resources and no suggestion by Minneapolis Public Schools that an expansion of agreements to provide more diamond sports facilities to Minneapolis park users would be supported or possible. In fact, the schools currently use more fields than it might have available under some sort of reciprocal agreement or arrangement.

The suggested scarcity of diamond sports facilities might be somewhat correct as the MPRB considers more advanced public-facing field reservation tools. MPRB Recreation staff indicate they are almost always able to accommodate requests for field use on a last-minute basis, perhaps not at the park a user requests but at some location in the system. Improvements in technology might help users understand last-minute availability.

There may also be a scarcity of field types—facilities oriented to certain levels of play. The 2023 high school girls softball season seems to be a key indicator that facilities supporting competitive high school play don’t fully exist in MPRB parks. The long-range plans offer an indication of where new and proper facilities would be implemented but these fields are not immediately available. The development of strategies and facilities to better accommodate high school girls softball were directed by the Board of Commissioners during the diamond sports facilities study. The TAC responded by offering suggestions of optimal locations for high school girls softball beginning in 2024, which staff used to define a set of fields for first consideration. That list is included in Appendix 11.4.

The TAC mentioned often that conditions for play are less than ideal at many of Minneapolis diamond sports facilities. Limited resources or field features and an inability to allow adequate time for recovery after play are contributing factors. Today, very few facilities are

rehabilitated but that may be incrementally changing as the Board of Commissioners approved limited funding directed specifically to the rehabilitation of fields in the neighborhood park system. That process will take years, will likely require displacement of activities from a field during its rehabilitation (which most often includes a one-year “grow in” period to fully establish a resilient turf), and should be accompanied by a program of setting fields aside for rest. Without this, the prospects of retaining a reasonably playable natural turf field are low, and the compacted and weed-prone conditions that exist in many MPRB fields will quickly return.

Establishing a true count of fields requires that overlapping fields be eliminated in the count and in the reservations system (so that, for instance, a softball user on

a diamond sport facility and a soccer user on a field sport facility using the same geography aren’t both allowed to reserve an overlapping facility, a condition which staff has already resolved as they look toward online reservations). It also requires an understanding of the MPRB’s class system for diamond sports facilities., with classes described in other portions of this report.

A true count of availability suffers from “returned fields,” facilities that are cancelled by the original reserving entity. TAC members noted that fields they believed to be reserved would stand empty even as they sought to utilize that same field. This situation results as the reserving entity cancels its reservation but communicating that single field’s changed availability is difficult. As staff and the TAC discussed field reservations, the creation of an online public-facing tool would seem to largely resolve this issue, as the cancelled field would be immediately made obvious and available.

7.2 Recommendations

Absolute scarcity—the actual number of diamond sports facilities—cannot be changed without redirection in long-range plan. The acquisition of new parkland to be used for diamond sports, or acquisition through partnerships aimed at unlocking otherwise fallow fields might reduce the perceived scarcity of diamond sports facilities and provide a more transparent path toward reservations. Because the system is evolving in the direction of the long-range plans, the list of available fields and types will need to updated



on a regular basis and integrated to into the public-facing reservations tools.

The availability of fields will be impacted by field renovations, which will begin in 2025 using funds directed to a NPP20 (20-Year Neighborhood Parks Plan) Rehabilitation category in the Board of Commissioners approved Capital Improvement Program. While the funds are initially limited to \$200,000, they will be important in allowing for an incremental investment in improved fields. Those fields will not be available during their rehabilitation and perhaps for a “grow in” period in the year following their rehabilitation.

Once rehabilitated, each field will benefit from a period of rest, during which turf is addressed with remedial actions and allowed to recover from use and intensive wear. Those rest periods, while in opposition to maximization of use, are fully aligned with this study’s goal of establishing “facilities for athletic pursuits providing a high-level experience for users regardless of ability.”

A table listing diamond sports fields by park and showing the class of each is included in the appendix.



7.3 Actions

To address concerns and capture opportunities identified in this study, the following actions are recommended for implementation. Where a cost is indicated, a budget allocation by the Board of Commissioners may be necessary to advance.

<i>Responsible party</i>	<i>Completion</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>Potential partners</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Field Count and Distribution ACTION 3.1: Create and maintain a public-facing field inventory with notications to gain alignment with long-range plans for parks				
MPRB Recreation, MPRB IT	Q1 2027	Costs are likely directed to the integration of field inventory into ActiveNET,		This action should be coordinated in concert with initiatives aimed at facilitating reservations and associated notifications.
Field Count and Distribution ACTION 3.2: Establish a rotation plan for natural turf fields allowing sufficient rest during a season of use and recovery following several seasons of use				
MPRB Recreation, MPRB Asset Management	Q4 2025	The costs for this action relate to maintaining fields “at rest” and the process of replacing “at rest” fields, with the potential for additional fields being needed for a full rotation program		



8.0 Field Standards

8.1 Conditions

There may be a sense that softball and baseball diamond organized in the MPRB's current tiers offer consistency in condition and features, that user can reserve a field knowing what to expect. It might be the case that baseball diamonds supporting the higher levels of competition offer a greater degree of uniformity but the same cannot be said for softball diamonds. In fact, the tiers have more to do with the care used by the MPRB in maintaining the field than the condition and features of the field. In fact, there are no definitive standards for type and class of diamond facility. Softball fields exist with and without outfield fencing, sometimes with the outfield fencing unaligned with standards for play. Some fields have players benches and dugouts, others do not. Importantly, fencing providing for player safety is not universally in place at MPRB's diamond sports facilities.

Consistency within field types establishes a greater understanding of the conditions users will encounter. Unless an individual is familiar with a particular diamond, there is no way to understand what the field offers while reserving it. While consistency would seem to be most important at higher skill levels—ensuring quality for competition, play at development levels also benefits from greater uniformity



between fields. It's no small challenge to create greater consistency: fields are sometimes challenged due to the size of a park; many suffer because they are overlaid with ice rinks during the winter; some fields will never achieve



uniformity across the playing surface because of what is buried below. As fields are placed into “classes” resulting from this plan, establishing consistency in condition and features should result.

Staff initiated a process of gaining some degree of standardization by framing field dimensions according to varying intensities of competition. The TAC offered its confirmation of those dimensions, in fact expanding upon it to align dimensions more closely with levels of play. In a similar way, features supporting play were reviewed—and expanded—in ways that assign certain features to the class of a field. Perhaps most important in that process is that player safety becomes a primary factor in the standardization of diamond sports facilities.

8.2 Recommendations

For the number of fields operated by the MPRB, it might be surprising that no field manual exists. Still, the care of fields is largely standardized and recorded for use by the MPRB’s Asset Management Department. With this plan, field standardization supporting equalized play at the various levels of competition is established. There will still be some degree of variation based on factors like the ability of a field to be accommodated in a park or the capacity of underlying soils to provide a foundation for play; these hopefully more subtle variations might be the things offering a home field advantage for some teams—while not resulting in a disadvantage for a visiting team.

A Diamond Sports Field Manual is a clear recommendation for implementation. Several components of the appendix to this report will comprise such a manual.

While it might from time-to-time be published, the Field Manual should be reviewed on occasion to ensure compliance with updated standards for play at various play levels. The important components of the Field Manual relate to:

- dimensional standards (optimal outfield depth and baseline distances, for example);
- field layout process (which may become important as the MPRB strives to engage qualified individuals to assist in preparing fields for play);
- features appropriate for various levels of play, including specifications for each, with an intention of creating consistency across field classes;



- maintenance regimes for field classes, including set up for games; and
- listing of fields by park and class.

The list is expansive and certainly beyond the MPRB's capacity for near-term implementation. From the perspective of the Board of Commissioners' goal for this study, a focus on play might take precedence over spectators and a focus on player safety would seem appropriate over the introduction of other amenities. The MPRB should encourage partnerships to advance implementation, perhaps allowing for improvements beyond the player and safety focus when the partner supports the introduction of amenities in at least two service areas, with guidance offered by staff to support a more equitable investment of the partner's support.

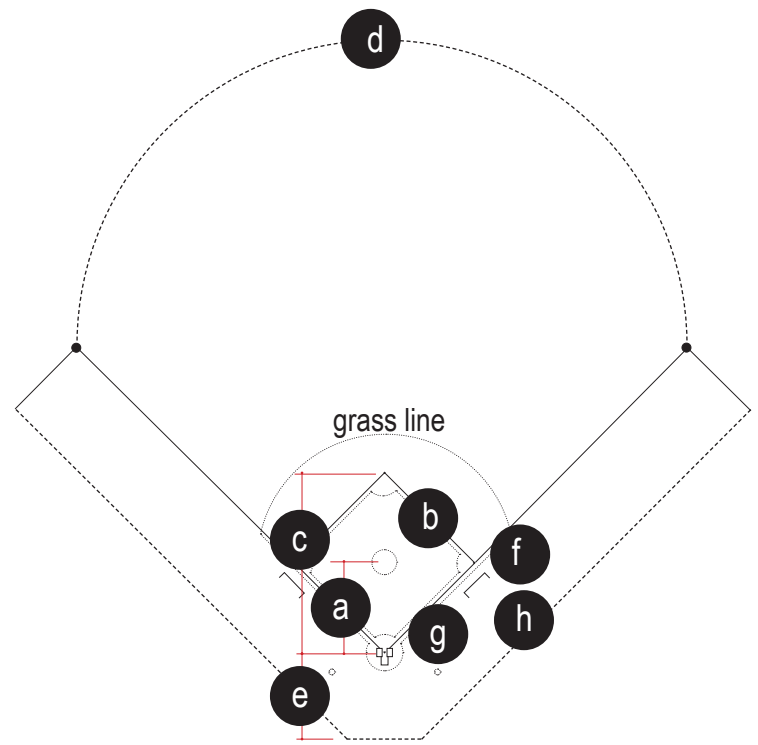
As much as there is a desire for clarity in the dimensional standards for diamond sports, there is a desire to create facilities distributed equally through the system that are aligned around key amenities linked to levels of competition and the MPRB's class designations for fields, with parallel facilities for baseball and softball as the higher levels of play.

Diamond sports facilities by class and park are listed in Appendix 11.2.



FEATURE	FIELD CLASS			
	ONE	TWO	THREE	FOUR
SAFETY				
Team bench fencing	Required	Required	Required	Required
Bull pen fencing	Required	Preferred	Optional	Not required
Non-overlapping field	Required	Required	Optional	Not required
FIELD				
Lighting	Required	Required	Preferred	Not required
Outfield fencing	Required	Required	Optional	Not required
Semi-permanent outfield fencing	Required	Required	Optional	Not required
Foul poles	Required	Required	Optional	Not required
Warning track	Required	Required	Optional	Not required

FEATURE	FIELD CLASS			
	ONE	TWO	THREE	FOUR
PLAY				
Full backstop	Required	Required	Preferred	Optional
Permanent bases	Required	Required	Preferred	Optional
Adjustable bases	Required	Required	Preferred	Optional
Scoreboard	Required	Required	Not required	Not required
Dugouts	Required	Required	Preferred	Optional
Team benches	Required	Required	Preferred	Optional
Drinking fountain/bottle filler	Required	Required	Preferred	Optional
Electricity	Required	Required	Preferred	Optional
Batting cage	Required	Required	Preferred	Optional
Team equipment shed	Required	Preferred	Not required	Not required
MAINTENANCE				
Equipment shed	Required	Required	Optional	Not required
Irrigation	Required	Required	Not required	Not required
Weed-free infield	Required	Required	Required	Preferred
Rain cover	Required	Required	Not required	Not required
SPECTATING				
Seating	Required	Required	Optional	Not required
Protected seating	Required	Required	Optional	Not required
Covered seating	Required	Required	Not required	Not required
Concessions	Required	Optional	Not required	Not required
Restrooms (portable)	Required	Preferred	Preferred	Preferred



Field layout, SOFTBALL

Level of play	Pitching rubber to home plate a	Base lengths b	Home plate to second base c	Outfield fence d
12U (fast pitch)	40 feet	60 feet	84 feet, 10-1/4 inches	min. 200 feet max. 225 feet
12U (slow pitch)	46 feet	60 feet	84 feet, 10-1/4 inches	min. 175 feet max. 200 feet
14U (fast pitch)	43 feet	60 feet	84 feet, 10-1/4 inches	min. 200 feet max. 250 feet
14U, 16U and 18U (slow pitch)	50 feet	65 feet	91 feet, 11 inches	min. 200 feet max. 225 feet
High school, women, and college (fast pitch)	43 feet	60 feet	84 feet, 10-1/4 inches	min. 200 feet max. 225 feet
Men (fast pitch)	46 feet	60 feet	84 feet, 10-1/4 inches	min. 200 feet max. 275 feet
Adult (slow pitch)	50 feet	70 feet	99 feet	co-ed min. 275 feet max. 300 feet

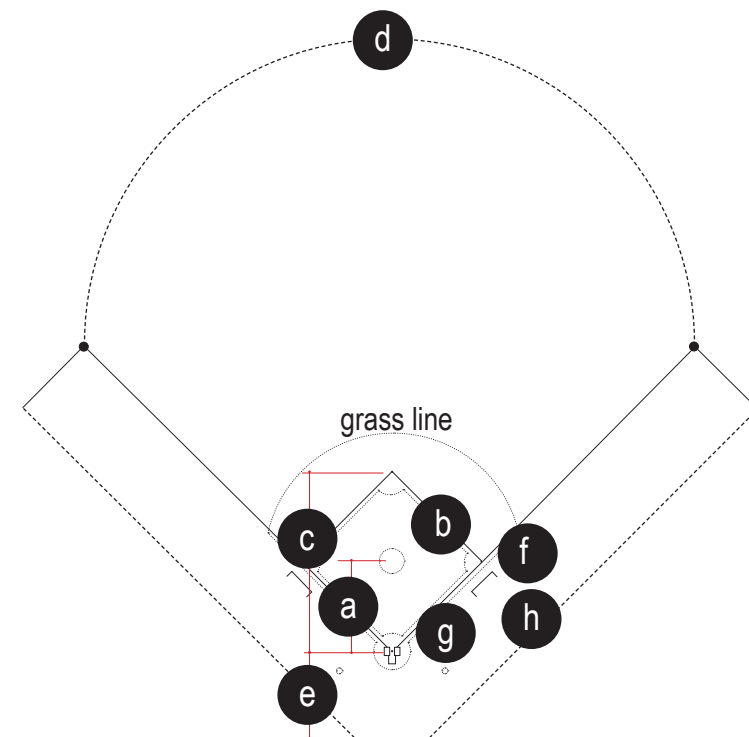
- Notes
- e** Distance between home plate and backstop is 60 feet.
 - f** Double first base used at 10U and 12U.
 - g** Three foot base line is 3 feet into foul territory and half the distance to home plate and first base.
 - h** Coaches Box is 5 feet by 20 feet and 15 feet into foul territory.
 - i** On Deck Circle is 5 feet in diameter, behind home plate, and ideally 37 feet from home plate
 - j** Backstop, dugout, and sideline fencing (see Field Manual).
 - i** See USA softball rules for detailed field dimensions for slow pitch softball

Standard dimensions, SOFTBALL

Level of play	Pitching rubber to home plate a	Base lengths b	Home plate to second base c	Outfield fence d
10U	46 feet	60 feet	84 feet, 10-1/4 inches	200 feet
12U	52 feet	75 feet	107 feet, 8 inches	250 feet
13U to 15U	60 feet, 6 inches	90 feet	127 feet, 3-3/8 inches	300 feet
18U, high school	60 feet, 6 inches	90 feet	127 feet, 3-3/8 inches	300 feet at foul lines, 400 feet at centerfield

Notes

- e** Distance between home plate and backstop is 60 feet.
- f** Double first base may be for 10U and 12U
- g** Three foot base line is 3 feet into foul territory and half the distance to home plate and first base.
- h** Coaches Box is 5 feet by 20 feet and 15 feet into foul territory.
- i** On Deck Circle is 5 feet in diameter, behind home plate, and ideally 37 feet from home plate
- j** Backstop, dugout, and sideline fencing (see Field Manual).



Standard dimensions, BASEBALL

Field layout, BASEBALL

8.3 Actions

To address concerns and capture opportunities identified in this study, the following actions are recommended for implementation. Where a cost is indicated, a budget allocation by the Board of Commissioners may be necessary to advance an action.

<i>Responsible party</i>	<i>Completion</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>Potential partners</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Field Standards ACTION 4.1: Implement facilities supporting high school girls softball according to Resolution 2023-119				
MPRB Design and Project Management; MPRB Asset Management	Work related to two fields must be completed prior to the start of the 2025 high school softball season	The Board of Commissioners allocated \$200,000 in the 2024 and 2025 Capital Improvement Programs with those funds available for this purpose.		This work was intended to occur before the start of the 2024 season.
Field Standards ACTION 4.2: Establish amenities at fields by class, advancing other amenities pending non-MPRB funding directed to improvements in at least two service areas				
MPRB Design and Project Management; MPRB Asset Management	This work is intended to be on-going	The NPP20 Field Rehabilitation Category has funds that can be used for this purpose; future capital projects might be determined to support some aspects of field improvements.	Partners for capital and rehabilitation work include Hennepin Youth Activities program and support from Minnesota Twins Community Fund.	Work will need to be coordinated with other field facilities as guidance is prepared.
Field Standards ACTION 4.3: Establish a field manual for diamond sports as a compilation of key materials, features, and amenities characterized in this study				
MPRB Design and Project Management	Q1 2025	Staff time to prepare and review content of manual	Review by MPRB Recreation, MPRB Asset Management, and diamond sports groups.	Initial work has been completed; to keep current, updates should be anticipated.



9.0 Care and Maintenance

9.1 Conditions

As a part of a larger discussion on field set up, staff provided the TAC with an overview of its maintenance practices. This allowed the TAC to better understand the conditions of some fields they are experiencing, including conditions of fields when play cannot be supported (when fields are too wet for care and for play). Importantly, this study is not directed to adjustment of maintenance but may suggest some fields be better aligned with their class designation based on this work.

It is important that there is a set of defined maintenance practices used by MPRB staff according to the current “tier” designations for fields. The TAC did not suggest these practices should be altered; in fact, these practices are highly technical and are best left to those with operational knowledge related to the fields, with some possible exceptions. As such, the existing practices are proposed as the ongoing standard for regular care under the new “class” designations.

Areas where the TAC offered significant input focused on the ability of diamond sports organizations to provide some of the regular care and maintenance required to



support improved play on diamond sports facilities--the exceptions noted above. To date, the MPRB has resisted allowing volunteers to take on activities like dragging infields, chalking fields, and repacking mounds and batter’s boxes. However, it is known that when these activities are undertaken correctly by volunteers the time available for staff to address other facility concerns increases. MPRB staff noted to TAC members that such a transfer of work would likely conflict with the MPRB’s collective bargaining agreements; TAC members noted they would not want volunteer activities to eliminate jobs. To the degree the MPRB could separate more basic field preparation activities



by having them performed by qualified individuals, it allows staff to pursue higher level maintenance. Maintenance performed by volunteers might be particularly useful during a “re-set” between games. The key would be the creation of some sort of annualized trainings, led by MPRB staff, to establish a set of qualified individuals to whom this activity might be transferred, even recognizing that such a transfer of care might not be universal for all diamond sports facilities.

9.2 Recommendations

To meet the goal of improving the quality of the experience of diamond sports regardless of a player’s abilities, the MPRB needs to continue its care and maintenance regimes to at least their current levels. As the rehabilitation of fields progresses, maintenance activities might only be increased to allow those fields to retain their rehabilitated conditions longer. Maintenance should strive to attain the performance requirements for fields listed in the chart, recognizing the level of play for each class (as demonstrated on the chart to the right)

Basic maintenance activities should not be redirected to qualified volunteers. The types of activities undertaken by volunteers might be directed to game and practice preparation, which might include:

- setting bases;
- dragging infield areas;
- packing mound and batter boxes;
- chalking lines; and
- setting outfield fence.

To support a transfer of some of these activities, the MPRB might organize a training to ensure the activities are conducted consistently by volunteers qualified by the MPRB. It would be logical to work with leadership of the several organizations who regularly use MPRB diamond sports facilities to support their programs to identify

MAINTENANCE ACTIVITY	FIELD CLASS			
	Class One	Class Two	Class Three	Class Four
Soil testing	1 time per year	1 time per year	1 time per year	
Fertilization	3 to 4 times per season	2 times per season	1 time per year	1 time per year
Aeration	Minimum 3 times per year	Minimum 2 times per year	Minimum 1 times per year	Minimum 1 time per year
Overseeding	Minimum 2 times per season – early spring and early fall	Minimum 1 time per season – early spring and/or mid fall	Minimum 1 time per season – early spring and/or mid fall	As needed
Top dressing	2 times per season – ¼ inch per application	1 time per season – ¼ inch per application	High use areas	Only to ensure safety and usability
Irrigating	Required; minimum 1 inch of water per week	Preferred, in non-rink areas; minimum 1 inch water per week	Minimum of 1/2 inch of water per week	Not applicable
Mowing	Mow to a height of 1-½ to 2 inches, taking less than 1/3 or less of the plant each time	Minimum of 2 times per week	Follow directed schedule	Follow directed schedule
Weed control	1 time per year with highly controlled application	1 time per year with highly controlled application	On as-need basis with highly controlled application	On as-need basis with highly controlled application



volunteers with interests and capacities for performing this work. Coaches would be a reasonable starting point since they are consistently present with their teams. As it instills a sense of responsibility for play of these sports, players of a certain age may also be capable of performing game preparation activities, provided the work occurs under the close supervision of qualified adult volunteers. Notably, all the work performed by qualified volunteers must be performed without the use of powered tools or equipment to conform to other MPRB policy.

Whatever groups are identified, it is critical they are qualified through a training program conducted by MPRB staff or by other experts under the direction of MPRB staff. Without this, the MPRB's recreational immunity may not withstand a legal challenge. It may be necessary for the organizations with volunteers performing this work to provide documentation that protects the MPRB in the event of an injury. MPRB's legal counsel are investigating those issues.

Finally, this work has typically been performed by MPRB staff who are members of unions, with their work being protected under a collective bargaining agreement. The MPRB cannot ignore those agreements, so expanding the ways in which field preparation occurs will require consent from those unions representing staff that would otherwise perform this work. It must be noted that those staff who prepare fields for practices and games will still have work to perform supporting the diamond sports fields.

9.3 Actions

To address concerns and capture opportunities identified in this study, the following actions are recommended for implementation. Where a cost is indicated, a budget allocation by the Board of Commissioners may be necessary to advance an action.



<i>Responsible party</i>	<i>Completion</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>Potential partners</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Care and Maintenance ACTION 5.1: Advocate for increased funding for rehabilitation of fields allowing for fields to be in improved condition more quickly with the expectation that improved conditions can be perpetuated.				
MPRB Asset Management; MPRB Strategic Planning (for budget)	Q3 2025	\$400,000, an increase of \$200,000 over the currently allocated funding through the Capital Improvement Program for field rehabilitation under the NPP20 program; costs for perpetuation of improved conditions need development.	The Hennepin Youth Activities Grant Program and the Minnesota Twins have consistently supported diamond sports or programs for capital and rehabilitation projects. .	The number of diamond sports and field sports fields in the MPRB system, an amount of \$400,000 would be a more appropriate allocation.
Care and Maintenance ACTION 5.2: Establish a service life for fields in each class along with costs for interventions at key points (beyond regular care and maintenance)				
MPRB Asset Management	Q3 2025	Costs will be determined as a part of the service life study, with the service life of various elements varying.		Reaching full service life for natural turf fields requires “rest” periods, allowing the turf to recover from intensive use. Replacement costs for fields at rest is not included.
Care and Maintenance ACTION 5.3: Create conditions where qualified volunteers might take on basic field care related to game and practice preparations, including establishing proper contractual provisions				
MPRB Asset Management, Superintendent. Legal counsel	Q1 2025	Train MPRB staff as the training leaders; equipment for use by volunteers would need to be acquired and stored at fields (estimated at less than \$2500 per field).	Youth leagues have indicated a willingness to participate in these activities.	A method of tracking qualified individuals would need to be established to ensure the program of care is following properly.



10.0 Partnerships

10.1 Conditions

The MPRB is fortunate to have benefitted from partnerships that delivered improved fields but it's difficult to encourage those partnerships without an overall guide for the system. This plan intends to demonstrate for potential partners a path toward improved fields aligned with a goal of enhanced opportunities for diamond sports play at every level of skill. It also provides a way to expand upon past requests by framing for potential new partners the benefits of aligning with the MPRB.

MPRB fields have benefitted from grants through the Hennepin Youth Sport Program (now the Hennepin Youth Activities Program). While intermittent and not always directed to fields, those grants have been used at Bethune Park, Folwell Park, Phelps Field Park, and others.

The basic process involves an application for improvements up to \$300,000. The MPRB and Minneapolis Public Schools coordinate applications through alternative grant cycles, allowing for schools to gain access to funds in years opposite of MPRB funding applications. The work outlined in this report would seem wholly aligned with the county's grant program. There is a match required.

Hennepin County also offers an equipment grant through the same source. The funds are given in lesser amounts and the MPRB typically directs funds received to various recreation centers throughout the system for purposes defined by the recreation centers.

Through the Twins Nike RBI program and since 1993, the MPRB has a long and beneficial relationship with the Minnesota Twins and the Minnesota Twins Community Fund that results in opportunities for more than 2,500 Minneapolis youth to be engaged in baseball and softball annually. The program also provides uniforms and equipment to all participants and has provided funding supporting diamond sports field renovations.

Through the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation in association with the Minnesota Twins and other significant donors, several artificial turf fields have been delivered to the MPRB:

- Bob Casey Field, a multi-purposed field at Stewart Park, with donations from The Toro Company and Land O'Lakes;
- Eddie Phillips Field, a multi-purpose field at Farview Park, with donations from the Phillips Family Foundation;



- North Commons Field, a field at North Commons Park, with funding from the Minnesota Twins and The Toro Company;
- Rod Carew All Star Field, a field at Xcel Energy Field, created on land owned by Xcel Energy with funding from the Pohlad Foundation and assisted by a Hennepin Youth Sports Program grant; and
- Sid Hartman All Star Field, a field at Northeast Athletic Field Park, with funding from the Minnesota Twins and Justin Morneau.

While these partnerships are notable, there are diamond sports organizations that contribute significantly to baseball and softball in the Minneapolis park system. Without them, the state of these sports in Minneapolis

would undoubtedly be far less than what is evidenced on fields today. The contribution of hours of time organizing leagues and schedules, developing skills, and teaching team play could not be replicated through the MPRB's staff.

10.2 Recommendations

It's clear the potential for diamond sports will require the MPRB to continue—even expand—efforts to bring philanthropic and grant dollars to the system. It's notable that, when pointed in a good direction, the MPRB can reasonably pursue those funds for the benefit of Minneapolis youth. The work needs to continue, though, especially with a guide for making coherent and consistent improvements throughout the park system.

It's also notable that the represented diamond sports organizations desire to help make or build connections with granting organizations. While staff must maintain a lead position in the pursuit of philanthropic dollars and coordinate those pursuits with an internal grants committee, reliance on the direct providers of baseball and softball in the Minneapolis park system could add significant context to a grant application while demonstrating a partnership that might otherwise be unrecognized.

Because many grant programs require matching funds for a successful grant, the MPRB must respond with its own capital funds to support an evolution of diamond

sports facilities. Already, the Board of Commissioners has directed in its 2024 Budget an amount of \$200,000 for field rehabilitation (which would be made available for all fields, not just fields supporting diamond sports). When dispersed across potentially several field improvement projects, that amount may not constitute a reasonable funding match. Advocacy to increase that amount in subsequent budgets is needed, increasing the annual allocation to \$400,000.

Capital funds can be used to support a match requirements for grants, especially since those funds are typically locally-raised. However, where rehabilitation dollars can be reasonably directed to parks where they are most needed, the capital funds are typically available through the 20-Year Neighborhood Park Program, which comes with an ordinance-mandated equity application and would typically apply to whole park improvements. Where a diamond sports initiative falls within a park with capital funding, efforts to align internal funding with grants supporting diamond sports will need to seek a balance with funding needed for a park's improvements aligned with a neighborhood's and the public's interests for that park.

The MPRB should seek the input of organizations supporting diamond sports. Much as been learned through input of the TAC during this planning process. Continued input and response—from the MPRB and from diamond sports organizations, will be necessary for the evolution and elevation of diamond sports within the MPRB.



10.3 Actions

To address concerns and capture opportunities identified in this study, the following actions are recommended for implementation. Where a cost is indicated, a budget allocation by the Board of Commissioners may be necessary to advance an action.

<i>Responsible party</i>	<i>Completion</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>Potential partners</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Partnerships ACTION 6.1: Align Hennepin Youth Activities grant program to enhance fields, working with Minneapolis Public Schools during its focus years under the existing agreement.				
MPRB Planning, MPRB Recreation; Minneapolis Public Schools	Agreement modifications in place prior to 2025 application submittal	Matching funds will be required as a part of the grant; existing NPP20 Field Rehabilitation allocation can serve as a source for matching funds	Minneapolis Public Schools	
Partnerships ACTION 6.2: Pursue grants and other non-MPRB funding for a major field project supporting high school girls softball				
MPRB Superintendent's Office; MPRB Planning	Funding pursuits completed by Q3 2025 to allow for design to be initiated; field completed by Q3 2027	\$2.25 million project cost for 2027 year of implementation	xxxx	Funding matches may be required; allocations in the Field Rehabilitation category of NPP20 may be needed for this purpose.

11.0 Appendices

11.1 TAC input supporting goals

A part of the TAC process included gaining input from staff on field use for high school sport and the TAC's goals for the planning process. This section contains a direct translation of input from TAC members relating to goals of the Diamond Sports Facilities planning project. Corrections were made to spelling and grammar (for the convenience of the reader but no content was intentionally changed).

11.2 Field inventory and class designation

This section contains a list of fields associated with features and designations by class as framed in this report.

11.3 Alternative field configurations

The TAC requested staff to review the opportunities for implementation of a “pin wheel” configuration for baseball and softball. While the directive for the report specifically noted it would not address reconfigurations and that existing long-range plans would be relied upon for field configurations.

11.4 High school girls softball fields

Direction from the Board of Commissioners to create this study was followed by specific directions for accommodation of girls high school softball. This section reviews that direction and poses a series of fields meeting the follow-up resolution requirements for fields.

11.5 ADA considerations for diamond sports facilities

The MPRB is required to adhere to guidance under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Staff summarized directions necessary for compliance in this section.

11.6 Diamond sports field manual

The MPRB has not had a manual with dimensions for ball field layout for varying levels of play. This manual, intended as a “living” document, will be updated as new information becomes available. In addition, the manual identifies field equipment and features to direct the procurement process, ensuring consistency in field across the system.

11.1 TAC input supporting goals

As a part of its early work supporting this study, TAC members offered input regarding various aspects of diamond sports facilities in the MPRB system. Similar input was aggregated roughly into themes, and from there a series of goals were established relative to each theme. This appendix does not change the goals articulated in the body of the report; rather, it provides the narrative input from the TAC that led to the creation of each goal.

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1	FACILITIES	TAC INPUT
1.a	Classify and publish a comprehensive list of fields according to use and including sizes, features/amenities, illumination, and maintenance regime for each listed field.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What constitutes practice field? Game field? Set up standards/ base-line expectations for what these fields look like (What amenities are needed? What do these fields look like for club games, high school, middle school? What grooming is expected? Not meeting these expectations makes players feel unvalued o Have a universal definition for what these fields look like. Maybe some practice fields need to become game fields- need for improvement on these fields. Know which fields we should be scheduling for practice, for games. Partnership: entities with a high volume of field rentals, in exchange for high usage, they provide some maintenance (Todd field: kids picking weeds 20 min before practice/game, but still paying for field use, however, can't use the field if they don't do it))</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Database of the fields (not just what fields, but field lengths, what amenities; what parks have what)</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Access to full list of what diamonds have what amenities (base lengths, dugouts, fences, lights, and how are those diamonds and grass maintained)</i>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Have centralized scheduling and provide schedules for a month out like hockey, acknowledging that the schedule may need to change during a given month</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Provide equipment boxes</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Determine when fields will be used for games and which will be used for practices</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Goal: HS baseball and softball has no weeds in the field - Accountability: how often are practice fields being dragged? Game fields? (set up expectations)</i>
1.b	Support skills development through the provision of appropriate features/amenities for varying levels of competition and experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>More 75-foot fields</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>More batting cages</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Make existing fields more flexible</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Provide equipment boxes.</i>
1.c	Establish fields for competition and playability at varying levels with player safety as the primary factor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Safety (better home plates, pitching rubbers, bench protection)</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Drag fields more often – establish a goal for each game and practice field</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Have the same weed control for all High School baseball and softball fields as Neiman and Parade</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Change shift times so staff can do maintenance when orgs need it</i>
1.d	Provide for consistently improved field conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Maintenance issue dashboard (Issues are raised, but unable to see if issue is addressed unless you physically go to field)</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Allow for rest periods for fields of all types (staff input)</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Provide funding for rehabilitation of natural turf fields (staff input)</i>

2	SCHEDULING	
2.a	Identify field use and conditions through a reliable, public-facing, and interactive tool demonstrating scheduling, maintenance, and game preparation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Make more data available to orgs (field conditions, maintenance)</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Provide good field inventory</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Centralized scheduling (Scarcity of fields)</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Lot of last-minute switches, changes, returns – make it easier to return fields to make fields available more quickly (helps reduce scarcity)</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Return unused fields more quickly</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Do a field inventory so the park board knows what facilities they have</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>From a park board perspective, we need management, we need someone to provide tools for these programs</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Artificial scarcity because hard to return fields</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Allow orgs and teams to pick up fields- not set in stone</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Visibility to what diamonds are available to use on short notice</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Visibility of the fields: increase ease of access to seeing what fields available and not</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A scheduling system that users can see and functional to filter appropriate data</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Centralized scheduling, schedules for a month out (allow parents and teams to plan their lives)</i>
2.b	Optimize scheduling and use of fields according to documented and publicly accessible procedures for registration and play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Have orgs better staffed to organize scheduling (need bodies and time)</i>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Need to develop a schedule/chart on when games start for different softball/baseball teams and how long they get to use the field, is there a ½ hour – one hour gap for maintenance or extra innings before the next game starts? How many games can a “game” field handle any given night?</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Figure out appropriate times for high school baseball and softball times, is there a half hour in</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Determine what is the pecking order for who has preference in reservations? Can someone kickoff a game that is running long?</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Work with central MPRB staff for use of diamonds instead of individual park directors</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Having both baseball and softball field close to each HS (accessible to kids by bike or walking; schools don’t provide busing to practice- kids must find own rides)</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>No defined or written document between parks, schools, residents, leagues etc. as to the structure of what teams get priority</i>
3	PARTNERING	
3.a	Create opportunities for maintenance to be performed by or under the direction of qualified individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Maintenance, MPRB shall (Get fields groomed and usable quicker)</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Provide toolbox so people can help with maintenance</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Allow clubs and teams to do maintenance on their own</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Allow other organizations to fix things, use things, set up equipment boxes</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Volunteer maintenance program o Like an “adopt a park” program</i>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Allow organizations to prep fields if they haven't been prepped (rake, chalk lines)</i>
3.b	Establish partnerships aimed at elevating the experience of play for all field users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What if park board and school board worked together to schedule things, create a structure of accountability, set it up so clubs can help raking, taking care of fields- set up accountability system so park doesn't have to take care of things/throw away things</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Need to locate (temporary and long-term) location of all seven High School softball and baseball fields.</i>
4	COMMUNICATIONS	
4.a	Provide timely and accessible information relating to the use and scheduling of fields as well as methods of coordinating with field user groups to define expanded opportunities for partnering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Have internal processes to raise issues to park board</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Red tape (individuals want to donate to park board to build fence or fix an issue but park board can't always accept money)</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>None of the issues are new or different, what can community partners do to help move forward on actionable items?</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Baseline should be determined by TAC, not just parks</i>
5	FEES AND COSTS	
5.a	Establish a basis for field use and rentals encompassing the reasonable costs of managing a system of fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Broader sliding scale of fees (cost isn't covered- why would a youth team from out of town get the same rate as an in-town team?)</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What's the cost of the fields? Not just maintenance but personnel</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Charge a rate that actually covers all costs</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Allow organizations to pay overtime fees if applicable.</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Perhaps a sliding scale for fees (more for non-Mpls groups)</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Allow orgs to pay for overtime for those who want to maintain fields</i>

11.2 Field inventory and class designation

As an appendix, it is expected the following field inventory demonstrating field class as posed in the body of the Diamond Sports Facility Study, will change as fields are improved, especially relative to fields supporting girls fastpitch softball. As modifications are made, this appendix will be updated so that it remains a relevant and publicly accessible reference for field users. Eventually, as an updated reservations system is implemented, the need for this inventory may be moot.

MPRB_ID	Park	Old MPRB Tier	Class	Dimensions			Service Area	Lights	Batting Cage	Dugouts	Notes	Overlaps Other Field?
				Bases	Rubber	Centerfield						
FLD100	Bossen Field Park	1				300	South					No
FLD94	Bossen Field Park	1				380	South					No
FLD95	Bossen Field Park	1				300	South					No
FLD96	Bossen Field Park	1				300	South					No
FLD97	Bossen Field Park	1				300	South					No
FLD99	Bossen Field Park	1				300	South					No
FLD98	Bossen Field Park	1				300	South					No
FLD107	Morris Park	1					South					No
FLD240	Neiman Sports Complex, Leonard H.	1	A			250	Not applicable					No
FLD247	Neiman Sports Complex, Leonard H.	1	A			375	Not applicable					Yes
FLD250	Neiman Sports Complex, Leonard H.	1	A			375	Not applicable					Yes
FLD261	Neiman Sports Complex, Leonard H.	1	A			275	Not applicable					Yes
FLD262	Neiman Sports Complex, Leonard H.	1	A			250	Not applicable					Yes
FLD236	Painter Park	1		60	46		Southwest				Baseball	Yes
FLD956	Bryn Mawr Meadows Park	2				300	Southwest					No
FLD957	Bryn Mawr Meadows Park	2				300	Southwest					No
FLD152	Farview Park	2		90, 75, 60, 60, 60	52, 46, 43, 40	475	North					Yes
FLD155	North Commons Park	2	A				North				Baseball	Yes
FLD234	Parade Park, The	2	A	90	60	415	Southwest					Yes
FLD27	St Anthony Park	2					Northeast					Yes
FLD677	Willard Park	2					North					
FLD216	Armatage Park, Maude D.	3		60, 75	46, 52		Southwest					Yes
FLD217	Armatage Park, Maude D.	3		90, 75	60, 52		Southwest				Ball field #6	Yes
FLD220	Armatage Park, Maude D.	3		90	50 with mound		Southwest					Yes
FLD221	Armatage Park, Maude D.	3		60, 60	46, 52		Southwest					Yes
FLD4	Bottineau Field Park	3		65, 60, 60, 60	52, 46, 40, 35	280	Northeast				Baseball	No
FLD91	East Phillips Park	3				200	South					Yes
FLD12	Jackson Square Park	3	A	65, 60	50, 43	200	Northeast				Baseball	Yes
FLD101	McRae Park	3					South					Yes
FLD103	McRae Park	3					South					Yes
FLD105	McRae Park	3					South					Yes
FLD25	Northeast Athletic Field Park	3		90	60	390	Northeast				Baseball	Yes
FLD26	Northeast Athletic Field Park	3		90	60	350	Northeast				Baseball	Yes
FLD19	Northeast Athletic Field Park	3		65, 60	50, 40	275	Northeast					Yes
FLD20	Northeast Athletic Field Park	3		75, 65	52, 50		Northeast					Yes
FLD21	Northeast Athletic Field Park	3		65	50		Northeast					Yes
FLD23	Northeast Athletic Field Park	3		65, 60, 60	50, 40, 46		Northeast					Yes
FLD678	Northeast Athletic Field Park	3					Northeast				Backstop and benches, no clear outfield	Yes

MPRB_ID	Park	Old MPRB Tie	Class	Dimensions			Service Area	Lights	Batting Cage	Dugouts	Notes	Overlaps Other Field?
				Bases	Rubber	Centerfield						
FLD193	Pershing Field Park	3		60, 60, 60	46, 40, 35		Southwest					Yes
FLD194	Pershing Field Park	3		60, 60, 60	46, 40, 35		Southwest					Yes
FLD115	Phelps Field Park, Edmund J.	3		60, 60	46, 40		South					Yes
FLD117	Phelps Field Park, Edmund J.	3		60	40		South					Yes
FLD110	Powderhorn Park	3		75, 60	52, 46		South					Yes
FLD111	Powderhorn Park	3		75, 60	52, 46		South					Yes
FLD113	Powderhorn Park	3		90	60		South				large with fenced in outfield	No
FLD210	Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Park	3		90, 75	60, 52	350	Southwest					Yes
FLD211	Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Park	3		60	46		Southwest					No
FLD138	Shingle Creek Park	3				325	North					Yes
FLD37	Waite Park	3					Northeast				Baseball	Yes
FLD188	Bassett's Creek Park	4		65	50		North				Field 3, Grading of the outfield is bad	Yes
FLD189	Bassett's Creek Park	4		65	50		North					Yes
FLD190	Bassett's Creek Park	4		65	50		North				Field 2	Yes
FLD144	Bohanon Park, John C.	4		60, 70	43, 50		North				Double first base	Yes
FLD118	Brackett Field Park, George A.	4		60	46		South					Yes
FLD120	Brackett Field Park, George A.	4		90	60		South					Yes
FLD122	Brackett Field Park, George A.	4		75, 65, 60	52, 50, 46		South				Has flooding problems	Yes
FLD199	Bryant Square Park	4		65, 60, 60	50, 50, 46		Southwest				Shared outfield with benches and short fence	Yes
FLD171	Bryn Mawr Meadows Park	4		90	60		Southwest				Baseball	No
FLD174	Bryn Mawr Meadows Park	4		65, 60	50, 40		Southwest				Softball field	Yes
FLD176	Bryn Mawr Meadows Park	4		90	60		Southwest				Baseball	No
FLD178	Bryn Mawr Meadows Park	4		65	50		Southwest				Softball field	Yes
FLD181	Folwell Park	4					North					Yes
FLD183	Folwell Park	4					North					Yes
FLD185	Folwell Park	4					North					Yes
FLD53	Hiawatha School Park	4					South					Yes
FLD56	Hiawatha School Park	4					South					Yes
FLD148	Jordan Park	4					North					Yes
FLD76	Keewaydin Park	4					South					Yes
FLD79	Keewaydin Park	4					South					Yes
FLD81	Keewaydin Park	4					South					Yes
FLD214	Kenny Park	4					Southwest					Yes
FLD215	Kenny Park	4					Southwest				Baseball	Yes
FLD223	Kenwood Park	4					Southwest				Baseball	No
FLD225	Kenwood Park	4					Southwest				Baseball	Yes
FLD226	Kenwood Park	4					Southwest					Yes
FLD227	Kenwood Park	4					Southwest					Yes
FLD57	Lake Hiawatha Neighborhood Park	4					South					Yes
FLD59	Lake Hiawatha Neighborhood Park	4					South					Yes
FLD126	Lake Nokomis Athletic Fields	4					South					Yes
FLD127	Lake Nokomis Athletic Fields	4					South					Yes
FLD129	Lake Nokomis Athletic Fields	4					South				overgrown	Yes
FLD131	Lake Nokomis Athletic Fields	4					South					Yes
FLD133	Lake Nokomis Athletic Fields	4					South					Yes
FLD134	Lake Nokomis Athletic Fields	4					South					Yes
FLD135	Lake Nokomis Athletic Fields	4					South					Yes

MPRB_ID	Park	Old MPRB Tie	Class	Dimensions			Service Area	Lights	Batting Cage	Dugouts	Notes	Overlaps Other Field?
				Bases	Rubber	Centerfield						
FLD201	Linden Hills Park		4				Southwest					Yes
FLD202	Linden Hills Park		4				Southwest				Baseball	Yes
FLD14	Logan Park		4				Northeast					Yes
FLD44	Longfellow Park		4				South					Yes
FLD46	Longfellow Park		4				South					Yes
FLD10	Luxton Park, George E.		4				Northeast				overlap with baseball	Yes
FLD208	Lyndale Farmstead Park		4				Southwest					Yes
FLD195	Lynnhurst Park		4				Southwest					Yes
FLD196	Lynnhurst Park		4				Southwest					Yes
FLD198	Lynnhurst Park		4				Southwest					Yes
FLD41	Marshall Terrace Park		4				Northeast					Yes
FLD42	Marshall Terrace Park		4				Northeast					Yes
FLD88	Matthews Park, Charles E.		4				South					Yes
FLD251	Minnehaha Creek Parkway (East of 35W)		4				South					Yes
FLD252	Minnehaha Creek Parkway (West of 35W)		4				Southwest					No
FLD256	Minnehaha Creek Parkway (West of 35W)		4				Southwest					No
FLD156	North Commons Park		4			225	North				Baseball	Yes
FLD154	North Commons Park		4				North				Baseball	Yes
FLD66	Pearl Park		4	90	60	375	South					Yes
FLD61	Pearl Park		4	60, 60, 60	46, 40, 35		South					Yes
FLD63	Pearl Park		4	60, 60, 60	46, 40, 35		South					Yes
FLD64	Pearl Park		4	60, 60, 60	46, 40, 35		South					Yes
FLD65	Pearl Park		4	60, 60, 60	46, 40, 35		South					Yes
FLD142	Shingle Creek Park		4	A	60	40	200	North				Yes
FLD83	Sibley Park		4	60	46		South				Next to school, overlap with ball field	Yes
FLD84	Sibley Park		4	75, 60, 60	52, 46, 40		South					No
FLD85	Sibley Park		4	60, 60	46, 40		South					No
FLD254	Stewart Park		4	75, 60	52, 46	225	South					Yes
FLD70	Todd Park		4	A	60	46	South					Yes
FLD73	Todd Park		4		60, 75, 60	46, 52, 40	South					Yes
FLD74	Todd Park		4		60, 75, 60	46, 52, 40	South					No
FLD75	Todd Park		4	90	60		South					Yes
FLD9	Van Cleve Park		4			350	Northeast				Backstops with not enough ball field space	No
FLD7	Van Cleve Park		4				Northeast				Softball field	Yes
FLD8	Van Cleve Park		4				Northeast				Softball field	Yes
FLD34	Waite Park		4				Northeast					No
FLD35	Waite Park		4				Northeast					No
FLD38	Waite Park		4	A			Northeast				Rod Carew, Artificial Turf	No
FLD235	Whittier Park		4				Southwest					
FLD48	Longfellow Park						South					Yes
FLD50	Longfellow Park						South					Yes
FLD16	Windom Northeast Park						Northeast					
FLD43	Xcel Field Park		A			275	Northeast					

11.3 Alternative field configuration

The charge in assembling a report on Diamond Sports Facilities was clear that configuration changes to field was not a part of the work, particularly because of the potential for impacts on long-range plans created and adopted as policy by the Board of Commissioners. Still, those plans can be amended; they are long-range in nature, looking out over horizon of 20 to 30 years, but every circumstance cannot be imagined during the planning process. Therefore, each plan includes a method for amendment.

In the case of configurations, the amendment process would logically begin with commissioners as it was their charge that directed configurations not be considered. Commissioners, at any time, could direct staff through a resolution to pursue an amendment to a master plan that would consider alternative configurations. For the purposes of some TAC members, such a reconfiguration would be directed to an arrangement of fields wherein four fields are positioned with their homeplates oriented inward with outfields reaching outward at right angles.

There is no pinwheel configuration for diamond sports in the MPRB system today. If such a configuration were desired, it would be advantageous to consider locations where the configuration fits the space available, preferably with little disturbance of existing trees and little reliance on movement of soils. Such a configuration would likely become more significant destinations, making access and parking availability strong considerations. If the pinwheel configuration is implemented, it may also require greater attention relative to operations and maintenance and, possibly, to the provisions of concessions as the configuration encourages tournaments and other more intensive play.

A critical consideration relative to long-range planning relates to non-physical impacts. While long-range plans consider available park spaces in their recommendations, they were also framed in collaboration with recreation program staff. In some cases, the implementation of a pinwheel configuration would not only displace long-standing recreation programs in one park but cause ripple effects in programs through several other parks—resulting in the need to adjust the long-range plan of at least one and possibly several parks.

As part of the diamond sports facilities study, staff considered locations where a pinwheel configuration of softball or baseball might work. Recognizing spatial needs, impacts of parking, and the ability to modify an adopted long-range plan, Xcel Field stood out as a possibility. The existing park includes Rod Carew Field but the remainder of the park is largely undeveloped relative to programmed activities. The long-range plan indicates an evolution of those undeveloped spaces with more native plantings. The introduction of three softball fields, one of which would have shorter outfield distances,

could occur on this site. The native planting area is retained, although it would occupy a lesser portion of the park. Importantly, Xcel Field is operated by the MPRB but owned by Northern States Power Company. Changes to the park that might increase its intensity of use or make it more difficult to accommodate the owner’s long-term interests must be prominent considerations.



Four-field configuration

11.4 High schools girls softball fields

Resolution

RESOLVED, That the Board of Commissioners directs staff to implement semi-permanent fencing and other improvements supporting high school girls fast pitch softball at Armatage Park, Bottineau Park, and Linden Hills Park, and at other parks where semi-permanent fencing is determined to be practicable, with implementation occurring as directly as practicable but not later than the start of the 2024 high school girls' softball season; and

Staff action

- Semi-permanent outfield fencing is to be installed at the parks indicated, and at other parks where it can be reasonably accomplished;
- Such outfield fencing would be installed at dimensions aligned with high school softball standards; and
- For the enumerated parks, outfield fencing would be installed prior to the beginning of the 2024 high school girls' softball season.
- Staff notes that limited funds were directed to support this resolution the 2024 Budget.

Resolution

RESOLVED, That the Board of Commissioners prioritizes implementation of diamond sports facilities supporting high school girls fast pitch softball at Todd Park and Bottineau Park as defined in their respective Service Area Master Plans and as sequenced for implementation in the 2023-2028 Capital Improvement Program;

Staff action

- As capital improvements are planned at Todd Park and Bottineau Park, the implementation of facilities supporting fast pitch softball shall be the priority for those capital projects.
- While those parks are included in the reference capital years, no engagement has been conducted. It is possible, through engagement, priorities other than softball will result. Staff's response to the engaged public will need to reference this resolution.

Resolution

Resolved, MPRB designates and defines 'premier fastpitch softball/youth baseball field' as the following: use NCAA 'rule 2: field of play' dimensions, with one exception, the distance from home plate to the pitcher's mound. Specifically, Centerfield not to exceed 220 feet, left and right not to exceed 200 ft, basepaths set 60 feet apart and 40 feet will be between the pitcher's mound and home plate. These dimensions will not convert once the field is designated. The designation also means that the fields will be groomed by the current standards of MPRB 'premier' softball convertible fields at Niemann sports complex and Bossen Park.

Staff action

- Implementation of field improvements will follow the specifications noted in the resolution, with such improvements being permanent to the field. Staff notes the following taken from the Minnesota State High School League SB_20202021_Rules and Policies (www.mshsl.org): "B. Pitching Distance: The pitching plate shall be set at 43-feet for interscholastic softball."
- Field care and preparation for practices and games will use standards aligned with MPRB "premier" fields.

Resolution

Resolved, the parks named as 'premier fastpitch softball fields' in temporary or permanent measure for the 2024 spring seasons are as follows: Jackson Square Park, East Phillips Park, Linden Hills Park, Todd Park, Bottineau Park.

Staff action

- Staff has reviewed the potential fields for use by high school girls softball with the TAC and are prepared to implement this portion of the resolution at the following fields:
 - Jackson Square Park (northeast);
 - Todd Park (south); and
 - Linden Hills Park (southwest).

- North Commons Park (north);
- East Phillips Park (south);
- Bottineau Field Park (northeast)

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance Guidelines

Facilitating ADA compliance for parking, accessible routes, seating, viewing areas, and other related features ensures that people with disabilities have equal access to sports fields and related amenities.

1. Parking and Drop-off Zones

- a. **Accessible Parking Spaces:** Designate accessible parking spots close to the field's entrance. The number of accessible spaces must comply with ADA guidelines based on the size of the parking lot.
- b. **Drop-off Zones:** Provide accessible drop-off areas for spectators and participants with disabilities.

2. Accessible Routes

- a. **Accessible Routes:** Identify and provide accessible routes that connect key arrival points to the diamond field and other amenities. These routes must comply with ADA width, slope, and surface standards.
- b. **Accessible Entrances to Dugouts and Bullpens:** Ensure accessible entrances to dugouts and bullpens by providing ramps or sloped areas for wheelchair users and players with disabilities.

3. Spectator Seating and Viewing Areas

- a. **Accessible Seating:** Provide accessible seating in multiple locations, including behind home plate and along the baselines. These areas should be on flat, stable surfaces and include companion seating.
- b. **Line of Sight:** Ensure accessible seating provides a clear line of sight to the field, comparable to that of other spectators, even when other spectators are standing.

4. Restrooms and Concessions

- a. **Accessible Restrooms:** Restrooms must have accessible stalls, grab bars, and sufficient turning space for wheelchair users, adhering to ADA standards.
- b. **Concession Stands:** Ensure counters are at an accessible height (no higher than 36 inches), and there are clear pathways to concession areas.

5. Player Accommodations

- a. **Accessible Dugouts:** Dugouts should provide enough space to accommodate wheelchair users.
- b. **Accessible Benches:** Ensure sufficient space for players using mobility devices to position themselves within or next to bench areas.
- c. **Accessible Fields:** The field surface should be designed or maintained in a way that allows participation by people with disabilities.

6. Assistive Listening Systems

- a. **Public Address Systems:** If a public address system is used in the facility, assess whether assistive listening systems are required in consultation with the MPRB ADA Administrator.

7. Signage

- a. **Directional Signage:** Provide clear, easy-to-read signs with the international symbol of accessibility to direct users to accessible routes, seating, restrooms, and parking.
- b. **ADA Compliance:** Ensure all signage adheres to ADA standards for readability, visibility, and accessibility.

8. Emergency Exits

- a. Ensure accessible emergency exits and procedures for people with disabilities, including proper lighting and clear paths from seating areas, dugouts, and other parts of the facility.

9. Maintenance of Accessibility Features

- a. Regularly inspect accessible paths, seating, restrooms, and dugouts to ensure they are clear, well-maintained, and meet ADA requirements. This includes repairing potholes, addressing erosion, and ensuring ramps and other accessible features are unobstructed.

11.6 Diamond sports facilities manual

The manual, due to its length, is a free-standing document accessible at:

https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/park-care-improvements/park-projects/current_projects/diamond-sports-facility-study/

The manual may, from time to time, be updated to ensure its relevance



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