

Beyond these recently completed and currently underway projects, no major field improvement projects are planned to occur prior to FY 2017. Providing additional resources before FY 2017 was not deemed possible with the overall resources available for capital projects this decade under City Council budget guidance. The FY 2012 – FY 2021 CIP includes funding in FY 2017 – FY 2020 for four additional artificial turf field projects. The specific sites for these conversion projects have not yet been finalized. However, an athletic field conversion study completed in 2009 used a comprehensive scoring methodology to rank the optimal sites for conversions. The two highest scoring sites (Brenman and Hammond Upper Field) have already received funding for conversion. The next highest scoring field sites were Hammond Lower Field, George Washington, Hensley and Braddock. While the field scoring matrix will certainly be updated at the time additional funding becomes available, it is likely that these same fields would still score relatively well.

City Supply of Athletic Fields

The City estimates that a stock of nine synthetic turf fields along with the existing supply of natural turf fields would be sufficient for handling the current demand for practices and games (both youth and adult leagues). By FY 2012, the City will have seven synthetic fields. This means the City will be operating under less than optimal conditions until around FY 2018, when the ninth synthetic turf field is scheduled for construction and opening. If sports league registrations continue to increase at current rates, it is likely that more than nine synthetic turf fields will be necessary sometime in the near future. Construction of two additional synthetic turf fields later in the decade is estimated to cost approximately \$4.0 million. Conversion projects to date have been less expensive because the sites were better suited for construction. Most of the remaining sites being considered for conversion have site constraints that will increase total project costs.

Operating with less than the recommended number of synthetic turf fields has two primary negative impacts: (1) the field conditions of natural turf fields degrade relatively rapidly necessitating expensive repairs in the future; and (2) some leagues (adult sports) are forced to hold practices and games at increasingly undesirable times, even late into the night. Despite these negative impacts, it is still possible to run successful youth and adult sports leagues in the City.