

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 26, 2012

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: RASHAD M. YOUNG, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO #21: ATHLETIC FIELD AT PROPOSED JEFFERSON-HOUSTON K-8 FACILITY

The purpose of this memorandum is to follow-up on a discussion during the February 27, 2012 City Council/School Board Subcommittee meeting and subsequent internal discussions as related to provision of a full-size synthetic turf field at the proposed Jefferson Houston K-8 facility. The new school facility is presently at concept plan stage and includes provision of a graded field with grass seed only. The current scope of work does not include engineering fees or material costs for either a synthetic infill system field or an engineered natural grass field.

City Staff Recommendation

City staff recommends adding a synthetic turf field to the Jefferson-Houston K-8 project as part of the new facility. To fund this initiative, \$890,000 is recommended to be shifted from planned funding for athletic field replacement (a City RPCA project) in FY 2017 to the Jefferson-Houston K-8 project in FY 2015. The impact on the City RPCA project is an \$890,000 reduction in FY 2017, from \$2.5 million to \$1.61 million, and an overall reduction from \$10.0 million to \$9.11 million in FY 2017 through FY 2020. While there is no net increase to the overall ten-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP), one planned field conversion would have to be deferred to accommodate the Jefferson-Houston athletic field. Details regarding this recommendation can be found below.

Additional Funding Request from ACPS

It is understood that the Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) are requesting \$1.6 million in additional funding for the Jefferson-Houston K-8 facility for provision of a full-size synthetic turf field. This request is based on a range of recent costs for field conversions at Minnie Howard (2008), Fort Ward (2010) and Ben Brenman Park (2011). These projects ranged in cost from \$1.1 – \$1.5 million and were managed by the City's Department of Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities (RPCA).

The scope of work for each facility constructed and managed by RPCA included full engineering design fees, site demolition, site preparation, field underdrain system, new athletic field lights, site electrical system, new stormwater management-water quality/quantity system, potable water-washdown/irrigation system, park plantings, minor parking modifications and other related site utilities. The new synthetic turf field being requested by ACPS does not include athletic lighting. RPCA has developed its own cost estimates based on a review of what would be required at the site, and those estimates are detailed below.

Cost Differential

The current scope of work (as part of proposed project funding in both the School Board's and City Manager's CIP) for an athletic field at the new Jefferson-Houston K-8 facility involves a graded field with grass seed. Other options could include a synthetic infill turf system field or an engineered natural grass field. The common basis of costs is a 185'x360' dimension full-size field.

- The direct material construction cost for a graded field with grass seed only is \$330,000. The construction cost and engineering fees are included as a part of the total project cost of the new Jefferson-Houston K-8 facility. If this were the desired option, no changes to the project budget would be necessary.
- The direct material construction cost for a synthetic infill turf system field is estimated at \$1,153,000, an increase of \$823,000 over what is planned as part of the new school facility. Additionally, design engineering fees (estimated at 8% of the increased costs) would need to be added, bringing the total cost of the synthetic field to approximately \$1,220,000. The total cost of the synthetic turf field would require an additional \$890,000 to be included in the Capital Improvement Program.
- The direct material construction cost for an engineered natural grass field is \$1,020,000, an increase of \$690,000 over what is planned and programmed as part of the new school facility. Additionally, design engineering fees (estimated at 8% of the increased costs) would need to be added, bringing the total cost of the synthetic field to approximately \$1,080,000. The total cost of the engineered natural grass field would require an additional \$750,000 to be included in the Capital Improvement Program.

Timing of Work and Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Impact

The new school building is currently scheduled for occupation during the 2014 – 2015 academic year. The current site development strategy anticipates retaining the existing school building until the new school building is constructed and operational. Thereafter the existing building would be demolished and site improvements (including athletic field construction) completed. This phased approach is similar to that employed during construction at T.C. Williams. It is noted that phased site construction will likely make the existing field and play area inaccessible for the duration of construction – a period of approximately 24 months – during which time alternative venues will be needed for ACPS and City programs.

The Proposed FY 2013 – 2022 CIP includes \$10.0 million in funding from FY 2017 – 2020 for replacement of existing synthetic turf fields and additional field construction. In order to align Jefferson-Houston K-8 athletic field construction with new school facility construction, funding would need to be accelerated to FY 2015. For the approved option, funding could be accelerated to FY 2015 by programming additional General Obligation Bonds in the FY 2015 financing plan and reducing FY 2017 borrowing by a commensurate amount.

To fund the Jefferson-Houston athletic field, a project from a prioritized list of field conversions presented to City Council in January 2009 would have to be deferred. If the artificial turf option at Jefferson-Houston is desired in FY 2015, funding in FY 2017 – 2020 would be reduced from \$10.0 to \$9.1 million. Included in the \$9.1 million are funds to re-carpet three existing turf fields at Minnie Howard, Ft. Ward, and Ben Brenman Park, with a total estimated cost of \$1.5-\$1.8 million. Assuming the higher of the costs, \$7.3 million would remain in FY 2017 – 2020 to continue field conversions. The following list is the prioritized list of projects from the 2009

field conversation study. The prioritization will be re-examined in the FY 2014 budget cycle to account for updated information since 2009. Assuming a base cost of \$1.2 to \$1.3 million, and accounting for inflation, the first five projects could be completed with the \$7.3 million in funding. The shift of funding for the Jefferson-Houston project eliminates the sixth project – field conversion at the Lee Center - on the prioritization list, due to the lack of funding.

| <u>Priority</u> | <u>Field</u> | <u>Property Jurisdiction</u> |
|-----------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 | George Washington (2) | ACPS |
| 2 | George Washington (1) | ACPS |
| 3 | Hensley | City |
| 4 | Patrick Henry | City |
| 5 | Hammond Lower | ACPS |
| 6 | Lee Center | City |
| 7 | Stevenson | City |
| 8 | Braddock | ACPS |
| 9 | Boothe | City |
| 10 | Ramsay | ACPS |
| 11 | John Adams | City |
| 12 | George Mason | ACPS |

Description of Types of Athletic Fields

GRADED FIELD AREA WITH GRASS SEED (estimated cost - \$330,000)

A graded field with grass seed includes a scope of work that is limited to site earthwork, surface grading, overland/surface drainage to utilities and grass seed without irrigation. This will yield a play field similar to what exists at the school today and similar to the natural grass field at FC Hammond. This scenario does not provide optimum use of the open space due to weather and user impacts and (as evidenced by the FC Hammond site) is difficult to maintain as a playing surface.

SYNTHETIC INFILL TURF SYSTEM (estimated cost - \$1,220,000)

A synthetic infill system field would contribute to enhancing the overall project site work LEED rating/certification capability, provide all-weather year-round use that extend hours of use and require minimal maintenance.

ENGINEEERED NATURAL GRASS FIELD (estimated cost - \$1,080,000)

An engineered natural grass field has a low storm water coefficient and is typically constructed with a nearly flat topography-therefore a robust sub-drain system that is similar to a synthetic infill turf system field is required. A full turf irrigation system would also be required. Engineered natural grass fields require an initial turf establishment period and thereafter intermittent/seasonal closure to allow the grass to regenerate.

STAFF: Debra Collins, Assistant City Manager
 Laura Triggs, Acting Chief Financial Officer
 James B. Spengler, Director, RPCA
 Morgan Routt, Acting Budget Director
 Ron M. Kagawa, Division Chief, RPCA
 Kendel Taylor, Assistant Budget Director