

**MEMORANDUM – CITY OF PASADENA  
Human Services and Recreation Department**

May 7, 2003

TO: Public Safety Committee

FROM: Patsy Lane, Department Director 

**SUBJECT: UPDATE ON IMPACT OF RECOMMENDED POLICY AND  
GUIDELINES TO ESTABLISH A MAXIMUM NUMBER OF  
HOURS PER WEEK OF PERMITTED USE OF CITY FIELDS**

**BACKGROUND**

On December 16, 2002, the Public Safety Committee of the City Council considered adoption of a policy and guidelines for use of City-owned sports fields, including setting a maximum of 30 hours per week of permitted use for high impact turf sports. That Agenda Report is included as Attachment 1 to this memorandum. The Recreation and Parks Commission had approved the proposed policy and guidelines on December 3, 2002. At the Public Safety Committee meeting of December 16, staff recommended that the policy and guidelines be effective for the pilot period of April 1 through June 30, 2003, after which staff would return to the Committee with a report on policy impact for this period as well as projected impact for Summer and Fall 2003 sports seasons.

Public Safety Committee considered the recommended policy and guidelines, but requested additional information on potential impact on local sports user groups and on PUSD fields prior to taking action on the recommendations. Of particular concern was the potential impact of the 30 hours per week limitation on major turf sports users as well as coordination with PUSD to assure that adopting such action would not result in additional demand on PUSD fields. The Public Safety Committee directed staff to return in Spring, 2003 to report on:

- o the actual impact of such a policy on permitted use by sports organizations for the Spring sports season (April 1 through June 30, 2003);
- o projected impact of said policy for the Summer and Fall 2003 seasons; and
- o progress on implementation of a coordinated sports fields approach with PUSD and other possible partners (including other public agencies and private schools with sports fields).

This memorandum provides the requested information update.

**ACTUAL IMPACT OF THE 30 HOUR PER WEEK PERMIT LIMIT FOR THE SPRING  
2003 SPORTS SEASON (APRIL 1 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2003)**

The primary Spring sports are baseball and softball, followed by limited youth and adult soccer, and Lacrosse. Major sports groups using City fields for Spring 2003 include: Little League District 17 (including Central, West, Southwest, Pasadena American and

East Altadena children and youth), PCC Men's Baseball, PCC Women's Softball, Pasadena Redbirds, Major League Softball (City's evening adult softball league), several high school baseball and softball teams (including Mayfield, Maranatha, St. Francis, and La Canada), Sierra Madre Softball, Villa Parke Youth Soccer, and Greater Pasadena Adult Soccer. There has been limited sports field use this Spring by several local soccer clubs (San Gabriel CYSA, Pasadena CYSA, Arroyo United), and AYSO Region 13 youth soccer, and a new girls San Gabriel Valley Lacrosse league.

Because baseball and softball are not major turf impact sports, and therefore not strictly subject to the 30-hour per week limitation on permitted use, the allocation of City sports field space has not been a significant problem for Spring 2003. Further, it appears that the local supply of baseball and softball facilities is not as limited (relative to demand) as that of soccer and football fields, so that Spring seasonal sports are more readily accommodated for local users.

All City fields used in Spring 2003 for major impact turf sports (i.e. soccer) were permitted within the maximum 30 hours per week guidelines. Those City fields permitted for baseball and softball use in excess of 30 hours per week are:

<u>Location</u>	<u>Average Permit Hours per Week</u>
Brookside - Jackie Robinson Baseball Diamond 1	82 hours/week
Hamilton - Fields 1, 2, and 3)	54 hours/week
Allendale	53 hours/week
Brookside - Softball Field 2	48 hours/week
Victory – Softball Fields 2, 3, and 4	34 hours/week
Victory – Baseball Diamond	31 hours/week

This level of use appears workable for this season, since baseball and softball do not have the detrimental impact on field conditions as is experienced by such hard impact turf sports as football, soccer and rugby. While field deterioration has been experienced at a few select fields, this appears to be due primarily to non-permitted use of fields.

**PROJECTED IMPACT OF THE 30 HOUR PER WEEK PERMIT LIMIT FOR THE SUMMER AND FALL 2003 SPORTS SEASONS (JULY 1 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30, 2003 AND OCTOBER 1 THROUGH APRIL 1 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2003)**

Applications from sports user groups for Summer and Fall 2003 field permits are currently being submitted to the Parks Reservations/Permit office, with a final due date of May 15, 2003. The Parks Reservation office will then develop a consolidated master schedule by May 23, 2003, displaying all requests by field location, date, time, and user group. On June 5, 2003, Parks Reservation staff will meet with the user applicants, at which time the various sports organizations will view the master calendar and collaborate to adjust any overlapping requests. Staff will encourage the user groups to work together to negotiate such modifications, with a priority on scheduling field time to accommodate actual game schedules and one team practice per week. Permits for Summer 2003 will be issued within approximately one week of the meeting of June 5, and Fall 2003 permits will be issued within the following month.

Based on a review of past Summer sports fields requests, including consideration of several field closures for maintenance, it appears that sports fields permits have not exceeded 30 hours per week for high impact turf sports for the Summer season. The

only ongoing seasonal sports users for Summer are Villa Parke Youth Soccer (Saturday games and weekday practices) and Greater Pasadena Adult Soccer League (Sunday games), with some limited baseball and youth soccer activities (primarily tournaments and multi-day sports camps through the end of August).

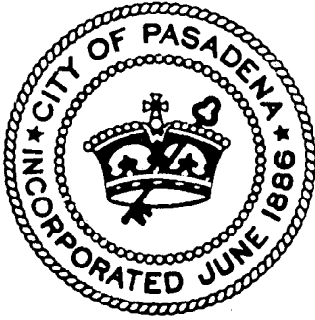
Effective September through early December, 2003, the limitation of 30 hours per week for high impact turf sports becomes problematic. Fall is football and soccer season, including games and practices for Pop Warner and Junior All American youth football organizations (Panthers and Ponies), AYSO Region 13 youth soccer, various local club soccer organizations (e.g. San Gabriel Valley CYSA, Pasadena CYSA, Arroyo United CYSA), City youth flag football league, City-contracted Infinity Sports adult flag football, Major League Softball (evening adult league) and Greater Pasadena Adult Soccer League (concludes in early Fall). According to Parks and Natural Resources, not all City fields can accommodate soccer and football due to their size, configuration or constitution (e.g. Hamilton fields do not have the depth to sustain such hard impact sports; the turf at Victory Park lower, Allendale, and Brookside ball fields 2 and 3 cannot tolerate adult soccer or football).

While the primary Fall user groups generally request fields from both the City and PUSD, it is projected that accommodating the demand for soccer and football will require use of several fields in excess of 30 hours per week (e.g. Victory Park, Brookside Area H, Villa Parke, and Robinson Park). Following the meeting with sports users on June 5, 2003 to review Fall season permit requests, staff will have actual data on the results of imposing a 30-hour-per-week maximum for football and soccer use, along with rosters indicating participant numbers, ages and residency. Staff will return to Public Safety Committee in mid-June and present these findings, with a recommendation regarding ongoing adoption of the field use policy and guidelines.

#### **PROGRESS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF A COORDINATED SPORTS FIELD APPROACH WITH PUSD AND OTHER POTENTIAL FIELD PARTNERS**

As reported to City Council on April 21, 2003, the Joint Sports Fields Coordinating Committee convened a first organizational meeting on April 16, 2003, attended by representatives of the City, PUSD and members of the City's Sports Council. Participants reviewed the proposed purpose and structure of the Joint Committee, made revisions as appropriate, and suggested a system for the selection of representatives from the various user groups. Sports organizations have now been requested to designate official representatives to the Joint Sports Field Committee, with the first Committee meeting scheduled for May 21, 2003. It is expected that this group will pursue the active participation of other local public organizations (e.g. Pasadena City College, City of Sierra Madre, Altadena/L.A. County), as well as work with private organizations (local schools, churches, etc.), to encourage coordinated, shared use of local fields.

Attachment 1



# Agenda Report

TO: City Council

DATE: December 16, 2002

THROUGH: Public Safety Committee

FROM: City Manager

**SUBJECT: RECOMMENDED POLICY AND GUIDELINES TO ESTABLISH A MAXIMUM NUMBER OF HOURS PER WEEK OF PERMITTED USE OF CITY FIELDS BY ORGANIZED SPORTS GROUPS, TO MAXIMIZE FIELD USE TIME WHILE ASSURING SAFE FIELD CONDITIONS**

**CITY MANAGER RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the City Council approve adoption of a policy and guidelines that establish a maximum of 30 hours per week for permitted use of City turf sports fields by sports organizations, effective April 1, 2003. Sports with only minimal turf use and impact (e.g. baseball and softball) will be permitted to exceed this limit, based on field conditions and space availability. Staff will report back on the impact of this policy following the spring season (April 1 to June 30, 2003), for further consideration as an ongoing policy.

**RECREATION AND PARKS COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:**

The Recreation and Parks Commission approved the staff recommendation, described above, at their meeting of December 3, 2002.

**BACKGROUND:**

On July 16, 2001, the Public Safety Committee of the City Council asked staff to prepare a comprehensive report that outlined the average permitted use of the City's athletic fields. Of key concern was protecting the City's recent investment in the sports fields, and the need to assure that these fields remain in safe, appropriate condition. Staff was also asked to compare the hours of permitted use with the optimum hours of use that would keep each field in usable condition. The issue of optimum vs. actual hours of field use has escalated due to the increased demand for permits from community user groups. Reviewing the permitted hours was a difficult task given the record keeping that was available at the time. However, it was clear that the fields were permitted an average of five to fifteen hours per week in excess of the optimum recommended twenty-five hours, and in some cases up to twice the recommended limit.

Public Works/Parks and Natural Resources staff presented a recommendation to the Recreation and Parks Commission on October 1, 2001, to support the drafting of an ordinance to prohibit the use of City park sports fields by organized groups without approved permits, and adoption of a policy that limited the usage of permitted hours for the sports fields to twenty-five hours per week. The Commission voted 7-0 in support of an ordinance requiring permits by organized sports, but requested more evaluation of the use issues before supporting a policy to limit the number of hours. As a result, the ad hoc Field Usage Subcommittee of the Recreation and Parks Commission was formed to review this matter and report back to the full Commission.


The Field Usage Subcommittee met on several occasions over the past year, with an overall focus on identifying guidelines to establish a workable balance between the positive benefits of organized sports while assuring that fields remain in safe, playable condition. The Subcommittee considered data and reports addressing the following areas of field use:

- impact of organized sports play on turf field conditions, including data from Public Works/Parks and Natural Resources (based on outside studies) indicating the number of hours a typical hybrid Bermuda grass turf can withstand per week without failure;
- identification of sports that are turf-friendly and those that are hard on the turf
- consideration of optimum growing seasons for turf;
- patterns in seasonal sports and year-round sports use;
- demand vs. supply of field hours;
- data on major sports group users, including the type of sport, number of adult and youth participants, and percentage of participants that are Pasadena residents
- issues in establishing limited hours, and related items;
- City policies and City - PUSD joint use agreement re: priority allocation of field permits;
- effectiveness and efficiency in the allocation of field time, to benefit the greatest number of potential users (providing opportunities for a range of sports activities, serving youth and adults, males and females as well as coed groups), etc.;
- assuring the availability of field time for "drop-in" casual use, neighborhood use, etc.;
- information from other communities about whether they have experienced similar field use problems and, if so, how such problems are addressed


Following a review of the items summarized above, the Subcommittee recognized that setting a maximum limit for field permit hours continues to be a difficult issue, with no easy answer until the supply of fields has expanded to better meet the demand. Accordingly, the Subcommittee recommended adoption of a policy that establishes a maximum of 30 hours per week for permitted use of City turf sports fields by sports organizations, effective for the Spring 2003 sports season (April 1 to June 30, 2003). Sports with only minimal turf use and impact (e.g. baseball and softball) will be permitted to exceed this limit, based on field conditions and space availability. Suggested guidelines for implementation are included as Attachment A, which also lists additional items for consideration in the further development and implementation of this policy. Staff will report back to the Commission regarding issues and impacts of this policy following implementation for the spring season, for further consideration as an ongoing policy.

At their meeting of December 3, 2002, the Recreation and Parks Commission approved the report of the Field Use Subcommittee, and recommended that this report be forwarded to the Public Safety Committee of City Council for action.

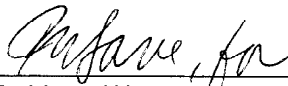
Respectfully submitted,

  
CYNTHIA J. KURTZ  
City Manager

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