

**CORRESPONDENCE
FROM 03/24/2026
MUNICIPAL SERVICES
COMMITTEE MEETING**



Letter from League of Women Voters for the Pasadena Area

From Cynthia Cannady

Date Thu 3/19/2026 1:28 PM

To Gao, Beilei <bgao@cityofpasadena.net>

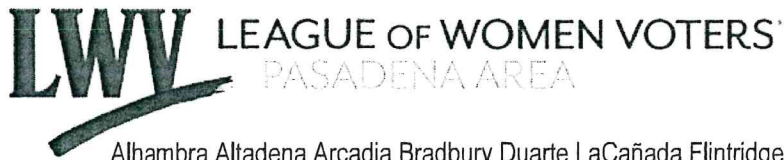
1 attachment (277 KB)

Artificial Turf_LWVPA_031926.pdf;

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Please accept the attached letter as correspondence for the 03/24/26 meeting of the Municipal Services Committee. This concerns the artificial turf issue and we don't yet have the agenda number.

For Martha Zavala, Advocacy Director



Alhambra Altadena Arcadia Bradbury Duarte LaCañada Flintridge Monrovia Monterey Park
Pasadena San Gabriel San Marino Sierra Madre South Pasadena

March 19, 2026

Pasadena City Council
City Hall
100 N. Garfield Avenue
Pasadena, California 91109

Public Information Needed on Environmental and Health Risks of Synthetic Turf

Dear Mayor Gordo and Members of the Pasadena City Council,

The League of Women Voters of Pasadena Area respectfully urges the Council to ensure that the public has full access to current, science-based information regarding the potential environmental and health risks associated with synthetic (artificial) turf, currently installed and proposed for our city parks, schools, and recreation areas.

As an organization deeply committed to informed public participation and evidence-based decision-making, we believe that community members deserve a clear, transparent understanding of the environmental and health implications of this issue. Information should address at least the following areas of concern:

Health Impacts, Especially for Children

Research continues to raise questions about potential exposure to PFAS, toxic substances, heat-related illness, and injury on artificial surfaces. Children, who spend significant time in close contact with these fields, are particularly vulnerable. It appears that reputable sources disagree on the nature and gravity of the risk, but we should not take chances with our children. At the least, we propose that full disclosure on potential health risks be disclosed and a city-wide information meeting be held before a decision is taken. Parents deserve to know about potential health risks to their children and have an opportunity to express their view before this body takes a decision.

Contribution to Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Synthetic turf is derived primarily from petroleum-based plastics. Its production, transportation, and eventual disposal contribute to greenhouse gas emissions at a time when municipalities are seeking to reduce their carbon footprint.

Heat Island Effect

Installation of artificial turf is known to increase temperatures in urban areas. Pasadena is already a high heat risk city and Northwest Pasadena is acknowledged to be an "urban heat island" characterized by higher temperatures due to dense development, asphalt, limited tree canopy and historical factors including land use policies.

Waste and End-of-Life Disposal

Artificial turf cannot currently be recycled at scale. Once worn out, typically within a decade or less, it becomes a significant source of non-recyclable waste headed for landfills. Its disposal accounts for major greenhouse gas emissions. What will happen to these plastic materials when children have played on them for years and they need to be replaced?

Water Pollution and Environmental Runoff

The breakdown of turf materials and infill releases microplastics and chemicals into surface water and stormwater systems, potentially affecting watershed health and local ecosystems. It ends up in the ocean, which is already polluted with plastic.

The League encourages the City Council to consider all of these risks and decline to authorize installation of artificial turf in public parks.

In any case, in the name of democracy, we urge you to offer and publicize a public forum on the topic, inviting critics and defenders. The public, especially parents of minor children, have a right to know and express their views before a decision is taken.

Thank you for your attention and your commitment to ensuring fully informed public decision-making in Pasadena.

Respectfully,



Martha Zavala
Director of Advocacy
League of Women Voters Pasadena Area



Letter of support for artificial turf, Item 2, MSC Meeting 2026-03-24

From Gary Lai
Date Fri 3/20/2026 10:23 AM
To cityclerk <cityclerk@cityofpasadena.net>

📎 1 attachment (69 KB)
Letter of support for artificial turf ban-City of Pasadena.pdf;

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Hello,
Please attach this letter of support for the banning of artificial turf as a public comment for Item #2, Municipal Services Committee meeting on 3/24/2026.

Thank you.
-Gary Lai



Gary J. Lai, CA PLA 4054, LEED AP BD+C
Principal and Founder
Pasadena, CA



Past-Chair of the Board

City Clerk of the City of Pasadena
Municipal Services Committee
City of Pasadena

March 20, 2026

RE: Letter of support for proposed artificial turf ban

To: Municipal Services Committee

As a landscape architect and sustainability expert with over 35 years of experience based in Pasadena, I strongly support any initiative aimed at curbing the use of artificial turf within the City of Pasadena.

The utilization of artificial turf in both residential and commercial settings poses significant environmental challenges. It contributes to soil erosion and exacerbates the effects of extreme heat, while failing to provide the advantages of natural materials in terms of evaporative cooling, stormwater infiltration, and carbon sequestration.

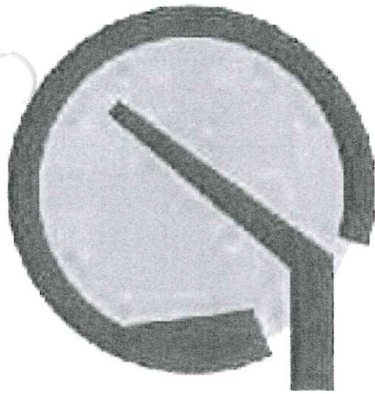
While it is essential to evaluate all turf areas and restrict their use to essential activities such as sports and recreation, artificial turf compounds the environmental impact by negating the positive effects of natural materials. Even in the context of water conservation, artificial turf necessitates irrigation systems to maintain a cool surface temperature, even during moderately hot days. For instance, the high temperatures experienced in recent weeks (March 2026) render an unirrigated artificial sports field unusable and unsafe due to the excessive heat generated by the field materials and the risk of severe burns.

In summary, artificial turf is more costly to install, requires ongoing maintenance, and consumes water while failing to offer the benefits associated with natural materials.

Sincerely,



Gary J. Lai, PLA, ASLA, LEED AP BD+C
Adjunct Faculty, CalPoly Pomona, Landscape Architecture



QUIXOTIC
NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

Gary J. Lai
ASLA, LEED AP BD+C
Principal
California License PLA 4054



Comments on 24 March 2026 Municipal Services Committee

From Joan Aarestad

Date Fri 3/20/2026 10:30 AM

To cityclerk <cityclerk@cityofpasadena.net>

1 attachment (21 KB)

Artificial Turf MSC 24 Mar 2026.pdf;

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Please provide these comments to the Municipal Services Committee.

To the Municipal Services Committee:

Re: 24 March 2026 Meeting
Agenda Item 2 Informational Only Artificial Turf

I am the Chair of the Sustainability Committee for Pasadena Beautiful Foundation. On past occasions, we have taken the position before the Environmental Advisory Commission that the City of Pasadena should not support the use of artificial turf. We are renewing that position before this Committee.

We would still like the following topics to be reviewed with reference to synthetic turf:

Pros

Reduces the use of water in maintaining urban landscapes

Reduces cost/time/energy of maintaining a living lawn

Allows for more days of use of fields

Cons

Smothers complex ecosystems in the soil that foster better environmental health

Does not reduce the use of water due to need to cool material

Made of plastics that break down into microparticles that cause health problems

Artificial turf is not recycled so becomes solid waste in landfills

Turf temperatures reach dangerous levels in hot weather which can cause burns

Additional costs/expenses due to electronics that require updates and become obsolete prior to the end of the useful life of the turf

We had previously asked for staff to provide us with the most recent technological assessments and financial analysis of the expenditures so that you as our elected representatives can make informed decisions. Once these topics are evaluated, we anticipate that artificial turf will be seen as NOT the most cost effective choice. And this does not even take into consideration health risks to vulnerable children.

This is perhaps a seminal moment to see whether our elected officials are truly committed to making the City of Pasadena a leader in environmentally appropriate decisions or not.

On a personal note, I am old enough to remember the searing pain I experienced in my lungs as a child playing on grass fields during the dark air quality days of the 1960s. It took massive efforts to improve our air quality so that my children did not experience that pain.

It is ironic that though our air quality is much improved from emissions, we are turning a blind eye to other forms of pollution from micro-plastics that children breathe in from artificial turf.

I hope this Committee has the strength to make the best decision for our community.

Respectfully submitted

Joan E. Aarestad
Chair, Sustainability Committee
Pasadena Beautiful Foundation



Comment on Artificial Turf Installation

From Ryan Kim
Date Fri 3/20/2026 4:38 PM
To Gao, Beilei <bgao@cityofpasadena.net>

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To the Municipal Services Committee,

My name is Ryan Kim, and I am a sophomore who lives and attends high school in Pasadena. I am deeply concerned by the proposal to replace the natural grass fields at Robinson Park and Villa Parke with artificial turf.

I first learned about the impacts of plastics on human and environmental health in eighth grade, and what I found was alarming. Artificial turf contains chemicals — including PFAS, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), and heavy metals such as zinc and lead — that are well-documented to cause cancer and hormonal disruption. Beyond chemical exposure, turf surfaces heat to dangerously high temperatures on sunny days; a friend of mine found that his trash can had melted onto his backyard turf after a warm afternoon. And the abrasive surface itself causes friction burns: my brother, who plays soccer, regularly comes home with skinned knees from sliding on artificial turf fields. These are the impacts of installing artificial turf.

Environmentally, the harms are also significant. Turf blades shed microplastics that enter stormwater, flow into the Arroyo Seco, and eventually reach the LA River and the Pacific Ocean, where they harm marine wildlife and accumulate in ecosystems. Beneath the field, turf sterilizes the soil and disrupts the roots, moisture, and microbial life that trees and plants in the surrounding area depend on. And the manufacturing of artificial turf carries a substantial carbon footprint — studies have found that synthetic turf generates several times the lifecycle emissions of natural grass per square meter installed.

For these reasons, I urge the committee to reject the installation of artificial turf at these facilities.

Ryan K. Kim (he/him)
Polytechnic School

"Be who you are and say what you feel, because those who mind don't matter, and those who matter don't mind."

— Bernard M. Baruch



Public Comment - MSC Item #2 (March 24, 2026): In Support of Real Grass Fields

From Christopher Yeh

Date Fri 3/20/2026 5:30 PM

To cityclerk <cityclerk@cityofpasadena.net>; Gao, Beilei <bgao@cityofpasadena.net>

Cc Lyon, Jason <jlyon@cityofpasadena.net>

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Dear Members of the Municipal Services Committee,

As a Pasadena resident, I am writing to express my strong support for the installation and maintenance of natural grass fields over artificial turf in our local parks and athletic facilities.

While I understand the desire for low-maintenance solutions, the long-term environmental, health, and safety costs of synthetic surfaces far outweigh their perceived convenience. I urge the committee to consider the following points:

1. Public Health and Safety

Extreme Heat: Artificial turf can reach temperatures between 140°F and 180°C, creating a significant risk for heat exhaustion and burns. In contrast, natural grass provides cooling through evapotranspiration.

Injury Risk: Studies consistently show higher rates of ACL tears and "turf burns" on synthetic surfaces due to increased friction and surface stiffness compared to the natural "give" of soil and grass. I myself have experienced several turf burns over the years.

Chemical Exposure: Many turf systems use rubber infill from recycled tires, which may contain heavy metals. Our residents should not be exposed to these harmful substances.

2. Environmental Impact

Microplastic Pollution: Turf fields shed plastic fibers and rubber particles that inevitably enter Pasadena's stormwater systems and local waterways.

Ecosystem Services: Unlike synthetic plastic, natural grass absorbs carbon dioxide, produces oxygen, and supports local biodiversity.

Stormwater Management: Natural soil acts as a filter and sponge. Replacing it with compacted layers for turf increases urban runoff and heightens local flooding risks.

3. Sustainability and Waste

Artificial turf fields have a short lifespan of 8-10 years and are notoriously difficult to recycle. Most end up in landfills as massive piles of non-biodegradable, petroleum-based waste. By choosing drought-tolerant natural grass suited for our climate, Pasadena can demonstrate a commitment to true environmental stewardship.

I believe Pasadena has the opportunity to lead by example, utilizing modern turf management techniques to maintain high-quality, water-efficient natural fields that protect both our children and our environment.

Thank you for your time and for your dedication to our community's well-being.

Sincerely,
Christopher Yeh
Pasadena Resident, District 6



Please vote no against plastic fields

From Lissette Rodriguez >
Date Fri 3/20/2026 8:02 PM
To Gao, Beilei <bgao@cityofpasadena.net>

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Hi,

As a Pasadena resident and homeowner who is concerned about the future of our city, I urge you to vote no against investing any more money into plastic fields. They are harmful to the environment, can pose long term risks to people's health, and are just a bad idea.

Thank you,

Lissette Rodriguez

Pasadena, 91106



Public Comment-MS C Item #2-Keep it real, Pasadena

From Kaly

Date Sat 3/21/2026 6:38 PM

To Gao, Beilei <bgao@cityofpasadena.net>

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Please do not install artificial turf in Pasadena parks, playing fields, and anywhere children and young people play.

The Icahn School of Medicine has detailed harms to people's health from being on these surfaces at all ages, but especially for young people.

"The Children's Environmental Health Center of the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai strongly discourages the installation of artificial turf playing surfaces and fields due to the uncertainties surrounding the safety of these products and the potential for dangerous heat and chemical exposures. In addition, recent studies demonstrating the presence of PFAS and microplastics in these products raise significant concerns for both human health and environmental contamination."

These installations will be harmful to everyone.

Thank you,
Kaly Trezos



Public Comment - MSC Item #2

From**Date** Sun 3/22/2026 11:55 AM**To** Gao, Beilei <bgao@cityofpasadena.net>

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Dear Committee Members:

This email expresses my concerns over the use of plastic astroturf "grass" in Pasadena.

Astroturf seems like an economical product to use in that it appears to lower maintenance costs; however, there are other costs that out way this "benefit."

As you are well aware of the litigious nature of our society, I can see the increased use of astroturf in Pasadena as a potential target for future litigation for the City from an environmental and personal injury perspective.

In addition to heavy metals and polyaromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), astroturf contains per- and poly-fluoralkyl substances (PFAS), which can be found in the backing and "grass blades." A 2024 study completed by Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER) found that three out of four soccer players or coaches were coated in PFAS after playing on artificial turf. While the toxicity of PFAS continue to be studied, its effect on the developing bodies of young children is something we shouldn't discount when considering overall costs.

Chemicals in astroturf can also leach off of the product and contaminate water sources. These artificial covers also impede water infiltration and can contribute to flooding in areas that haven't been designed to absorb additional flow.

Accidents from sports played on astroturf are also a consideration. In her September 19, 2023 article, "Injuries Related to Artificial Turf," Katerina Kerska, from the National Center for Health Research states that there is an increase in ACL and ankle injuries, concussions, abrasions, and heat related injuries when athletes play on artificial surfaces.

These are but a few of the many articles that speak to the issues regarding astroturf. In my opinion, as a 50 year resident of Pasadena, the costs of using this product do not outweigh the "benefit."

Sincerely,
Dianne Franks



Villa Parke Turf Field

From Clara Carmichael

Date Sun 3/22/2026 2:43 PM

To Gao, Beilei <bgao@cityofpasadena.net>

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To Whom It May Concern,

I go to high school in Pasadena, and I am concerned that Pasadena's Municipal Services Committee is being asked to replace the synthetic turf field at Villa Parke with turf instead of grass. A grass field would serve our community much better for many important reasons.

Artificial fields release microplastics which do not break down--- they break *up* into smaller and smaller pieces that can take centuries to eliminate. These microplastics pose serious environmental and health threats to your constituents. I hope that when making this decision Pasadena's MSC will play the long game. Young people like me are counting on you to prioritize giving the athletes who play at Villa Park a better future over the few minor inconveniences that come with grass fields.

I have played soccer in Pasadena for years with AYSO Region 13 and TFA Club, and I know that it is very uncomfortable to play on turf fields. The sun warms the plastic grass to high temperatures making the bottom of my cleats heat up. After the games, my feet will be pink and raw from being scalded every time I take a step. It is not a fun experience. My team and I are always disappointed when we hear that we will be playing a game on a field made of artificial grass. The fans and parents are equally averse because of the sweltering heat on turf sidelines.

The point of an athletic facility is to serve the athletes that play there and the community; to foster a safe and fun athletic environment. By that logic, I urge you to replace Villa Parke's turf field with real grass.

I appreciate all that you do to listen to young people like me who are directly affected by your choices.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Clara

Clara Carmichael
Polytechnic School
Class of 2029
She/Her/Hers



Public Comment - MSC Item #2 - Keep it real, Pasadena!

From Eileen Hsu
Date Sun 3/22/2026 6:39 PM
To Gao, Beilei <bgao@cityofpasadena.net>

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Dear City Council of Pasadena,

Good day to you. I'm writing to urge you not to use synthetic turf. The only thing it offers is a temporary illusion of green turf, except that it is anything but and comes with high environmental, public health, and taxpayer costs. Even Pasadena's own Turf Removal Program (<https://pwp.cityofpasadena.net/turfreplacement/>) strongly discourages and strictly prohibits rebate from the use of synthetic turf for all of the reasons that my fellow Pasadena residents who oppose it list. (repeated below for your convenience.)

If cost of maintenance of real turfs is high, increase the field reservation prices. If people complain, cite the very real climate change, decreasing availability of water, and increasing cost of living. That's the truth.

Synthetic turf is the lie.

Fake fields are hotter

- Artificial turf can reach 140–180°F on hot days, which we're seeing more and more of.
- These temperatures increase risk of burns and heat-related illnesses (heat exhaustion, heat stroke), especially for children and athletes.
- Grass fields stay significantly cooler due to evapotranspiration.

Fake fields produce microplastic pollution

- Turf fields shed microplastics as fibers and rubber infill break down.
- These particles enter stormwater systems, waterways, and eventually the ocean.

- Microplastics are now found in air, water, soil, and human bodies, raising long-term health concerns.

Fake fields expose park users to harmful chemicals

- Many turf systems use crumb rubber infill made from recycled tires, which can contain:
 - Heavy metals (e.g., lead, zinc)
 - PAHs (polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons)
- While research is ongoing, there is increasing concern about chronic exposure, especially for youth athletes.

Fake fields provide no environmental benefits

- Unlike grass, artificial turf:
 - Does not absorb carbon dioxide
 - Does not produce oxygen
 - Does not support biodiversity
- It replaces living ecosystems with non-recyclable, petroleum-based materials.

Fake fields increase stormwater / flooding risk

- Natural soils absorb and filter water.
- Turf fields are typically installed over compacted layers that reduce infiltration.
- This can increase urban runoff, increasing local flooding risk and pushing pollutants into local waterways.

Fake fields pose long-term waste and environmental problem

- Artificial turf fields typically last 8–10 years.
- Fields are made from non-biodegradable plastics—most end up in landfills.
- Turf is made from fossil fuels and requires energy-intensive manufacturing.
- Replacement cycles mean repeated carbon emissions and material use.

Fake fields pose greater injury risks

- Studies have found higher rates of certain injuries (e.g., ACL tears, turf burns) on artificial surfaces.
- Turf can create more surface friction and stiffness than natural grass.

Real grass is a time-tested, cooler, safer, and healthier option

- Modern grass field management (e.g., improved drainage, drought-tolerant species) can:
 - Reduce water use
 - Support year-round play
 - Deliver environmental and cooling benefits

Thank you for your attention,
Eileen Hsu

Pasadena, CA 91106



Outlook

Villa Parke Turf Field

From Benjamin Heuer**Date** Sun 3/22/2026 8:22 PM**To** Gao, Beilei <bgao@cityofpasadena.net>

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To Whom It May Concern,

I go to high school in Pasadena, and I am concerned that Pasadena's Municipal Services Committee is being asked to replace the synthetic turf field at Villa Parke with turf instead of grass. A grass field would serve our community much better for many important reasons.

Artificial fields release microplastics which do not break down--- they break *up* into smaller and smaller pieces that can take centuries to eliminate. These microplastics pose serious environmental and health threats to your constituents. I hope that when making this decision Pasadena's MSC will play the long game. Young people like me are counting on you to prioritize giving the athletes who play at Villa Park a better future over the few minor inconveniences that come with grass fields.

I have an artificial turf yard at home and have had multiple trash cans and other plastic devices melt onto the grass when the temperature rises. I have (luckily) not really had to go on the grass barefoot or in minimal foot covering but can imagine how tough that can be, given that plastic has melted onto it. Those days of extreme heat, I generally avoid playing on the grass outside for fear of my feet burning. The point of installing artificial turfs is to minimize the minor inconveniences provided by organic grass, but in hot places like SoCal and Pasadena, artificial turf can easily go unused because of our climate.

The point of an athletic facility is to serve the athletes that play there and the community; to foster a safe and fun athletic environment. By that logic, I urge you to replace Villa Parke's turf field with real grass.

I appreciate all that you do to listen to young people like me who are directly affected by your choices.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Ben Heuer

(he/they)

Class of 2029

Polytechnic School



Public Comment for MSC 3/24/26

From Heather Robb

Date Mon 3/23/2026 8:01 AM

To Gao, Beilei <bgao@cityofpasadena.net>; cityclerk <cityclerk@cityofpasadena.net>

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Hello there,

My name is Heather Robb. I live in District 3, and have served as the "at large" commissioner on the EAC for the past three years. I am writing about Agenda item #2, Artificial Turf at Athletic Fields and City Parks. As an environmental advocate and a Pasadena parent, I am writing to voice my **STRONG OPPOSITION** to the continued use of Artificial Turf in Pasadena's parks and athletic fields. There are so many arguments against its usage, so as the former head of the EAC's water subcommittee, I'd like to focus on its detrimental impacts on our ground water and drinking water.

Ground Water: Since artificial turf is essentially a plastic rug, it prohibits our soil from naturally absorbing rain water. Instead, the water runs off it and is swept away into our storm drains. As Pasadena works towards water independence, we need more opportunities to recharge our groundwater, and the use of artificial turf is in direct opposition to this goal.

Drinking Water: As Artificial Turf ages and breaks down, it pollutes our soil and water with microplastics and PFAS. Pasadena's drinking water is excellent, we have so much to be proud of with our treatment center, and recent testing showed that PFAS are not currently detected in our water. But the continued use of artificial turf will make that more difficult to maintain, and the dangers of both microplastic and PFAS are well-documented.

I urge you to protect the future of Pasadena's water supply, and vote to **BAN** the continued use of Artificial Turf in our parks and athletic fields.

Thank you,
Heather Robb



Outlook

Public comment on artificial turf

From Suzanne York

Date Tue 3/24/2026 7:48 AM

To Gao, Beilei <bgao@cityofpasadena.net>

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To the Members of the Pasadena Municipal Services Committee,

I am writing to respectfully urge you to reject any current or future artificial turf projects in Pasadena including new installations, replacements, and maintenance contracts.

As more data emerges, concerns about the health and environmental risks of artificial turf continue to grow. Artificial turf is not simply "plastic grass"- it is a complex system made up of synthetic fibers, infill (often crumb rubber from recycled tires), and chemical treatments. Studies have identified hundreds of chemicals in these materials, including polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), phthalates, and PFAS, so-called "forever chemicals"-many of which are known carcinogens, neurotoxicants, and endocrine disruptors.

PFAS in particular are deeply concerning. These chemicals persist in the environment and in our bodies, and have been linked to immune dysfunction, developmental harm, and increased cancer risk. Artificial turf also contributes to microplastic pollution, contaminates surrounding soil and waterways through runoff, and creates hotter surface temperatures that can endanger users.

While some studies suggest limited direct evidence of harm, the scientific consensus is clear on one critical point: **there are significant gaps in long-term health research**, especially regarding cumulative exposure, particularly for children, who are more vulnerable. In the face of such uncertainty, the precautionary principle should guide public decision-making.

At the same time, Pasadena has not fully explored the potential of natural turf as a viable, forward-looking alternative. Advances in turfgrass science, such as the work being done at the University of California, Irvine, are developing more resilient, drought-tolerant grass systems that can dramatically reduce water use while maintaining durability. These innovations offer a path toward fields that are not only safer and cooler, but also more environmentally sustainable and cost-effective over their full lifecycle.

Real grass fields provide natural cooling, support biodiversity, avoid plastic waste, and eliminate the ongoing exposure to synthetic chemicals. With proper investment and modern management practices, they can meet Pasadena's recreational needs without placing our children, our communities, and our environment at unnecessary risk.

3/24/26, 8:02 AM

Inbox - Gao, Bellei - Outlook

Pasadena has long been a leader in environmental stewardship. This is an opportunity to lead again- by choosing solutions that prioritize health, sustainability, and long-term fiscal responsibility.

I urge you to do the only right thing: **reject artificial turf projects and commit to exploring and investing in safer, natural alternatives.**

Respectfully,

Suzanne York, resident, District 2 and member of Pasadena Environmental Advisory Commission

 Outlook

Letter to the Municipal Services Committee for 3/24/26 meeting

From Vanessa Alexander

Date Tue 3/24/2026 9:12 AM

To cityclerk <cityclerk@cityofpasadena.net>

 1 attachment (43 KB)

Artificial Turf Athletic Fields Letter.VWA.3.24.26 (4).pdf;

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Please find attached my letter in support of the Environmental Advisory Commission's recommendations regarding artificial turf on Pasadena's athletic fields.

Municipal Services Committee

RE: Artificial Turf Athletic Fields at City Parks

March 24, 2026

Dear Members of the Municipal Services Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for the recommendations of the Environmental Advisory Commission regarding the use of artificial turf in the City of Pasadena. As a Pasadena resident and mother of two children actively participating in sports (AYSO, Pasadena Southwest Little League, and high school cross country and track) – I have avidly followed reports on the health and environmental dangers presented by the adoption of artificial turf.

However, you don't need to read the reports to understand just how miserable it is for the children (and their families) when natural grass is replaced by artificial turf. Games are routinely canceled (or playing periods shortened) due to extreme heat on the field. Even when the threshold for cancellation is not met, the experience is brutal. An 80-degree game on grass is delightful, but on turf it is trying and the impact is compounded as the temperature rises.

At track meets, coaches race to claim any available patches of grass to place the team pop-up tent to try to mitigate heat exposure throughout the day. At a February track meet (temperatures in the mid-80s) my son had to wait on the turf field in the midday sun for almost an hour before his race and suffered from heat exhaustion.

The abrasion risk is all too real– a fall or slide on turf (a weekly occurrence when your child plays goalie) causes a scrape akin to road rash which needs to be scrubbed out vigorously to avoid potential infection from myriad substances.

The crumb rubber fill and plastic blades don't just stay on the field—they come home in shoes, socks, and shin guards. They are all over my car, in my laundry, and on my driveway where they wash into the storm drainage system and pollute local waterways and the ocean.

Artificial turf fields promise increased playability and reduced water usage with minimal risk. In reality, turf may prevent a few weeks of rainouts, but extreme heat makes many days, especially in our warmer months, unsafe or miserable to play. Our children deserve safer surfaces to play on: real grass is better for their health and our environment.

Thank you for considering the Environmental Advisory Committee's recommendations and prioritizing the health and safety of Pasadena's children and the well-being of our shared environment.

Sincerely,

Vanessa Alexander

Pasadena, CA 91105



Outlook

MSC Public Comment - Agenda Item #2 - Artificial Turf Fields

From Wesley Reutimann ·

Date Tue 3/24/2026 11:32 AM

To Gao, Beilei <bgao@cityofpasadena.net>

Cc Kristin Reutimann

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Good afternoon Chair and Members of the Municipal Services Committee,

As a Pasadena household with two young children who participate in local sports leagues, we are writing to urge the City to adopt a moratorium on further use of artificial turf fields.

As climate change drives more frequent and intense heat waves, investing in materials that exacerbate heat is inconsistent with Pasadena's public health and climate resilience goals. The recent March heat wave across Southern California underscores an immediate and growing public health threat to Pasadena residents, especially children and older adults, extreme heat. Artificial turf fields reach significantly higher surface temperatures than natural grass, often becoming dangerously hot during periods of elevated ambient temperatures. This not only limits their usability during an increasingly long part of each year, it increases the risk of heat-related illness for youth and adult athletes alike.

Artificial turf is a plastic product without a viable path for reuse. Often marketed as sustainable, **plastic is not recyclable at end-of-life.** There is presently no financial market for it. At best plastic materials such as water bottles can be downcycled (i.e. they require new fossil fuels to be repurposed, in contrast to say a glass or aluminum can). However the economics to downcycle plastic are not favorable, a major reason why 90% of "recyclable" plastic water bottles end up in landfills in California. Plastic fields are even more difficult to repurpose, with most ending up in landfills where they leave a further toxic legacy.

The question before the City is not only about safety from heat and chemical exposure, but about broader environmental sustainability, lifecycle impacts, and community health.

Rather than spend almost a million dollars to commit the City to another decade of plastic pollution, now is the time for the Council to chart a cooler course and provide children in some of the city's hottest, highest-need neighborhoods with access to real turf.

We respectfully urge the Committee to adopt a moratorium on new and replacement artificial turf fields.

3/24/26, 12:11 PM

Inbox - Gao, Beilei - Outlook

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

The Reutimann Family
Pasadena 91103



Outlook

Artificial turf

From Laura Solomon >
Date Tue 3/24/2026 12:42 PM
To Gao, Beilei <bgao@cityofpasadena.net>

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To the Municipal Services Committee:

My name is Laura Solomon, and I am a resident of Pasadena and a former chair of the Environmental Advisory Commission. It has come to my attention that the City of Pasadena is considering replacing artificial turf with more artificial turf. Frankly, I am shocked that the City would even consider this, because the environmental problems with artificial turf are well known. Surely we can do better.

I urge the city to replace artificial turf with grass or native plants, depending on the use and situation.

Artificial turf is plastic, which degrades and then harms anyone who has regular contact with it, like children playing soccer. It causes horrific damage to the environment. I could write a book on the harm that degraded plastic is doing to our planet.

Artificial turf gets hot, which is the last thing we need here in Pasadena, where we just broke multiple records with our recent heatwave. How much water will the City have to use to cool down this plastic grass? The amount will only rise as our climate gets hotter and drier.

Artificial turf cannot be recycled. Does the City really want to be responsible for adding tons of decaying plastic to our landfills?

And plastic is made from oil. The current war with Iran shows us how important it is for us to move away from petroleum-based products as much as we can.

Conversely, grass and plants provide multiple benefits. They create a cooling effect. They provide oxygen. When they die, they can be composted and returned to the soil. They provide habitat for all kinds of animals, including birds and insects.

Please do what's best for all of our residents, including children, trees, birds, and other wildlife. Replace artificial turf with native plants and/or grass. Can we really call ourselves a Green City if the "green" is made of plastic?

3/24/26, 1:18 PM

Inbox - Gao, Beilei - Outlook

Thank you for your time.

Laura Solomon

Pasadena, CA 91106
626-437-1867

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 Outlook

MSC Comment - Item #2 - Please Support a Municipal Moratorium on Plastic Fields

From D Woelke

Date Tue 3/24/2026 12:47 PM

To Gao, Bellei <bgao@cityofpasadena.net>

Cc Hampton, Tyron <thampton@cityofpasadena.net>; Cole, Rick <rcole@cityofpasadena.net>; Jones, Justin <jjones@cityofpasadena.net>; Lyon, Jason <jlyon@cityofpasadena.net>

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24 March 2026

OPPOSE ITEM #2

Dear Members of the Pasadena Municipal Services Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments on behalf of Safe Healthy Playing Fields, Inc. (SHPFI).

SHPFI is an all-volunteer 501-c-3 non-profit organization. We are committed to educating communities, policymakers and elected officials about the health, safety, and financial realities of plastic fields versus grass fields, and other synthetic surfaces, for their parks and schools. Our constituency ranges from concerned individuals to community and civic organizations, legal, healthcare and science professionals, municipal leaders, and state legislators.

We strongly urge you to place a moratorium on the use of artificial turf fields in Pasadena parks and city facilities.

These "fake fields" routinely reach temperatures of 140–180°F on hot days and have been know to reach well in excess of 200°F conditions that are becoming more common – posing serious risks of burns, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke, and even death, especially for children and athletes. In contrast, natural grass remains significantly cooler. There have been 2 instances of death from heat stroke playing on plastic fields in CA recently- a 12 year old playing at 8:30p on a 88 °F day in

February, another in November 2025 in Los Angeles. This is no longer a risk from Aug through October. Black and brown athletes are drying more frequently on plastic playing fields.

Adolescent lives matter. They have been exposed the longest and most frequently to these toxic products via inhalation, ingestion and inhalation. Already dressed from head to toe in plastic clothing, pads, helmets, leggings, shoes and socks, they become readily overheated, increasing the absorption of toxic and cancer causing chemicals. Just as younger children, adolescents have developmental winds, which extend into early adulthood.

Artificial turf also sheds microplastics and can expose users to harmful chemicals from crumb rubber infill, and from the toxic and cancer causing chemicals that leach from the plastic carpet blades, backing and shockpads. These materials then enter our stormwater system and waterways, contributing to long-term public health and environmental concerns. Each regulation sized field sheds 2 to 3 thousand pounds of plastic blades per year (CA DTSC). The Robinson field is supersized, not regulation sized. Newer so called non-infill synthetic turf has 16x more blades and sheds even more!

The city's 2 fields are in EJ/SJ communities, imposing yet greater risk to vulnerable populations, adding the burden of heat island effects, toxic exposures, and, in the case of Robinson Park, increasing inequity by locking off the overheated toxic field, excluding those who cannot afford to "pay to play."

Unlike living grass, synthetic fields provide no environmental benefits. They do not cool the air, support biodiversity, or absorb stormwater, and may worsen flooding. They also create significant waste, as fields must be replaced every 8–10 years, often sooner, and are not recyclable- despite industry claims that are being recited by staff members of Parks and Rec.

Natural grass fields are the safer, cooler, produce oxygen, enhance rather than decimate biodiversity, do not contribute to the massive amount of plastic pollution, and provide more a future-proof choice for all who live in and visit Pasadena.

Respectfully submitted,

Dianne Woelke MSN, Board Member
Safe Healthy Playing Fields, Inc.

<https://www.safehealthyplayingfields.org>

SHPFI is an all-volunteer nonprofit 501-c-3





Outlook

Agenda item #2

From Cynthia Cannady

Date Tue 3/24/2026 12:52 PM

To Gao, Beilei <bgao@cityofpasadena.net>

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Dear MSC,

I join the calls for a moratorium on installation and replacement of artificial turf (AF) fields in our city. There are so many reasons to ban AF fields that it's hard to know where to start.

I will focus on three compelling reasons for a ban.

First, the risk of harm to children playing on the fields is serious. There are multiple reports from credible scientific sources identifying and analysing the risks to all persons, but especially to vulnerable children. Most recently California's Dept of Toxic Substances Control published a [technical report on AF](#). The report is disturbing. In summary, it finds:

"The use of artificial turf raises concerns due to its potential to expose humans and the environment to PFASs. People who use (e.g., play on) artificial turf can be directly exposed to PFASs through inhalation, ingestion, and dermal absorption. Young children and other sensitive subpopulations are especially vulnerable to the effects of this class of chemicals, some of which are developmental toxicants. In addition to its potential to expose users to PFASs, artificial turf can also release PFASs to the environment. As artificial turf weathers, it can leach PFASs into water. Once released to the environment during product manufacture, use, or disposal, PFASs become part of a virtually closed cycle leading to chronic human and ecological exposures. PFASs are found in aquatic, atmospheric, and terrestrial environments, including remote locations far from any point source. They are present in indoor dust, drinking water sources, food, wildlife, and humans—including the milk and serum of breastfeeding women. Because persistent PFASs lack a natural degradation route, their levels in the environment, humans, or biota will continue to rise for as long as PFASs are produced and used in consumer products. In California, most end-of-life artificial turf is disposed of in landfills, which can release PFASs to the environment in leachates and gaseous emissions. Wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs) that collect landfill leachates, surface runoff, and residential and commercial wastewater do not effectively remove PFASs. PFASs in influent partition either to effluent water or sludge."

The Pasadena Public Health Dept cites a recent Cal EPA study that **admits that AF contains toxic compounds**, but discounts the *bioavailability of toxic fumes and particulate matter*, and laments "small exceedences." The public health department acknowledges that "more studies would be helpful" and careful study is warranted to assess long term impact. Cancer? Asthma?

On our children? No.

AF may contain cadmium, benzene, Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs), phthalates, styrene, Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) and per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are found in the plastic blades, backing, underlayment pads and in some plant based infills added to keep the blades upright.

Children are vulnerable. cadmium, benzene, Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs), phthalates, styrene, Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) and per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are found in the plastic blades, backing, underlayment pads and in some plant based infills added to keep the blades upright. Endocrine disrupters in plastics can have grave impacts on sexual development and are implicated in breast and other cancers.

Why would we take a vendor's word that is monitoring manufacture to reduce PFAS? It is actually absurd that Parks and Recreation is recommending AF installation without specifics and representations about the AF content and manufacture.

And **who decides** whether children should be exposed to "low risk" of asthma and cancer? What efforts have been made to inform parents of what is in this AF and this supposed "low risk" so that they can make the difficult decision to pull their children out of highly desirable sports programs?

In a city where black and brown children and adults have aggravated levels of asthma and respiratory diseases, which the Public Health Dept has declined to study, the notion that exposure to environmental toxins and PFAS is low risk is worrisome.

What is a low risk? Apparently, it is too great for parents at Polytechnic School and for parents in San Marino. But OK for Villa Park and Jackie Robinson.

Second, it is undisputed that artificial turf is hot, and exposes children to heat related injuries and creates a heat island effect. The last thing we need in **heat-threatened Pasadena**, especially in central and NW Pasadena, is more heat.

As one of the world experts on AF, Dr. Sarah Evans from Mt. Sinai Hospital in New York, has explained "it gets really hot." Dr. Evans has been sued by the AF industry for publishing factual scientific information about AF.

Indeed the politics of AF is worrisome. The Cal EPA report cited by the Pasadena Public Health Dept was produced over objection from scientific panelists, as this [LA Times Article](#) explains.

Third, it is undisputed that artificial turf and its constituent chemicals are made from petroleum products and that its manufacture, installation use and disposal creates greenhouse gas emissions.

Why would we go to the trouble of implementing the Climate Emergency Resolution 9977 to reduce our city's greenhouse gas emissions but then spend a million dollars on AF products that emit greenhouse gasses?

And the amount of GHGs from AF is appreciable. AF is made from petroleum-based materials like polyethylene, polypropylene, or nylon. The production of synthetic fibers and backing requires high-

3/24/26, 1:18 PM

Inbox - Gao, Beilei - Outlook

temperature manufacturing, emitting substantial carbon dioxide. When it's use is complete, it goes into landfill where it creates more GHGs.

I urge you to reject the Parks and Recs demand for AF installation.

Cynthia Cannady



MSC Comment - Item #2 - Please Support a Municipal Moratorium on Plastic Fields

From Petrea Burchard

Date Tue 3/24/2026 1:04 PM

To Gao, Beilei <bgao@cityofpasadena.net>

Cc Hampton, Tyron <thampton@cityofpasadena.net>; Cole, Rick <rcole@cityofpasadena.net>; Jones, Justin <jjones@cityofpasadena.net>; Lyon, Jason <jlyon@cityofpasadena.net>

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Dear Members of the Pasadena Municipal Services Committee,

I urge you to place a moratorium on the use of artificial turf fields in Pasadena parks and city facilities.

Please! Have you ever walked on artificial turf on a summer day? Better have some thick boots on. They get so hot they will literally burn your feet. I know, because I stepped on one once, in sandals. Bad idea.

These "fake fields" routinely reach temperatures of 140–180°F on hot days – conditions that are becoming more common – posing serious risks of burns, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke, especially for children and athletes. In contrast, natural grass remains significantly cooler.

Artificial turf also sheds microplastics and can expose users to harmful chemicals from crumb rubber infill, including heavy metals and other toxic compounds. These materials then enter our stormwater system, environment, and waterways, contributing to long-term public health concerns.

Unlike living grass, synthetic fields provide no environmental benefits. They do not cool the air, support biodiversity, or absorb stormwater, and may worsen flooding. They also create significant waste, as fields must be replaced every 8–10 years and are not recyclable.

Natural grass fields are the safer, cooler, and more future-proof choice for our community.

Sincerely,

 Outlook

MSC Comment - Item #2 - Please Support a Municipal Moratorium on Plastic Fields

From Levi Brewster

Date Tue 3/24/2026 1:12 PM

To Gao, Beilei <bgao@cityofpasadena.net>

Cc Hampton, Tyron <thampton@cityofpasadena.net>; Cole, Rick <rcole@cityofpasadena.net>; Jones, Justin <jjones@cityofpasadena.net>; Lyon, Jason <jlyon@cityofpasadena.net>

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Sincerely,

Levi Brewster



MSC Comment - Item #2 - Please Support a Municipal Moratorium on Plastic Fields

From Greg Apodaca

Date Tue 3/24/2026 2:39 PM

To Gao, Beilei <bgao@cityofpasadena.net>

Cc Hampton, Tyron <thampton@cityofpasadena.net>; Cole, Rick <rcole@cityofpasadena.net>; Jones, Justin <jjones@cityofpasadena.net>; Lyon, Jason <jlyon@cityofpasadena.net>

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Natural grass fields are the safer, cooler, and more future-proof choice for our community.

Sincerely,

Greg Apodaca
Chief Explorer
Community 3.0x



Outlook

MSC Comment - Item #2 - Please Support a Municipal Moratorium on Plastic Fields

From Pilar Reynaldo >

Date Tue 3/24/2026 2:54 PM

To Gao, Beilei <bgao@cityofpasadena.net>

Cc Hampton, Tyron <thampton@cityofpasadena.net>; Cole, Rick <rcole@cityofpasadena.net>; Jones, Justin <jjones@cityofpasadena.net>; Lyon, Jason <jlyon@cityofpasadena.net>

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Natural grass fields are the safer, cooler, and more future-proof choice for our community.

Sincerely,

Pilar Reynaldo

 Outlook

MSC Comment - Item #2 - Please Support a Municipal Moratorium on Plastic Fields

From Terry Saucier

Date Tue 3/24/2026 3:02 PM

To Gao, Beilei <bgao@cityofpasadena.net>

Cc Hampton, Tyron <thampton@cityofpasadena.net>; Cole, Rick <rcole@cityofpasadena.net>; Jones, Justin <jjones@cityofpasadena.net>; Lyon, Jason <jlyon@cityofpasadena.net>

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Dear Members of the Pasadena Municipal Services Committee,

I am a member of a 60+ coalition that is seeking a ban on new and replacement installations of artificial turf across all applications due to its negative impacts on human health, the environment and wildlife. I urge you to place a moratorium on the use of artificial turf fields in Pasadena parks and city facilities and prioritize nature-based solutions – California native plants and drought-tolerant grasses that use less water, are more cost effective, can meet playable hours needed, thrive in our climate, recharge our groundwater, and provide food and habitat for local wildlife.

Sincerely,

Terry Saucier

SoCal Stop Artificial Turf Task Force, Chair

[Coalition Artificial Turf Letter - please share](#)