



City of Houston

Annise D. Parker
City Controller

Steve Schoonover
City Auditor

Parks and Recreation Department Management and Maintenance of Existing Athletic Fields

Performance Audit

Report No. 2009-24



OFFICE OF THE CITY CONTROLLER
CITY OF HOUSTON
TEXAS

ANNISE D. PARKER

January 28, 2009

The Honorable Bill White, Mayor
City of Houston, Texas

**SUBJECT: Parks and Recreation Department
Management and Maintenance of Existing Athletic Fields – Performance Audit
Report No. 2009-24**

Dear Mayor White:

In accordance with the City's contract with Jefferson Wells International, Inc. (JWI), JWI has completed a Performance Audit of the Management and Maintenance of the Parks and Recreation Department's (PARD) Existing Athletic Fields. The objectives of the engagement included:

- Determining whether PARD has a system to identify the effectiveness of the management and maintenance of the current athletic fields.
- Determining the accounting of the the user fees collected, were they spent to enhance or improve the conditions of the fields for which they were collected, were they used for general maintenance and upkeep of other park facilities (e.g. pools, playgrounds), and/or were they returned to the General Fund.
- Determining whether there is any change in management and maintenance of fields for leagues paying with "sweat equity" and/or paying reduced user fees, versus those leagues paying full user fees.
- Selecting a sample of existing Level 1 and targeted Level 2 Adopted Fields and performing physical observations to determine if the conditions of the fields reflect that proper maintenance procedures have been performed.
- Utilizing an online survey tool to obtain input related to management and maintenance of athletic fields from permitted athletic fields users of record.
- Providing recommendations for improving the coordination, efficiency, and effectiveness of the management and maintenance of athletic fields to improve their appearance and functionality.

The report, attached for your review, identified various opportunities for improving the coordination, efficiencies, and effectiveness related to the management and maintenance of athletic fields processes and procedures. The results and recommendations identified during the audit are included in the body of the report. The report also includes a survey utilizing a web-based survey

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tool to obtain input from permitted users of athletic fields regarding the fields they used. Draft copies of the matters contained in the report were provided to PARD officials. The Views of Responsible Officials as to actions being taken are appended to the report as Exhibits I.

We commend PARD management for their timely efforts to take action to remedy the deficiencies identified by the audit team. We also appreciate the cooperation extended to the JWI engagement team by PARD personnel during the course of the audit.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Annise D. Parker". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A".

Annise D. Parker
City Controller

xc: City Council Members
Anthony Hall, Chief Administrative Officer
Michael Moore, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Joe Turner, Director, Parks and Recreation Department
Michelle Mitchell, Director, Finance Department
Alfred Moran, Jr., Director, Administration and Regulatory Affairs Department

January 15, 2009

Controller Annise D. Parker
City Controller
City of Houston
901 Bagby, 8th Floor
Houston, Texas 77002

Dear Controller Parker:

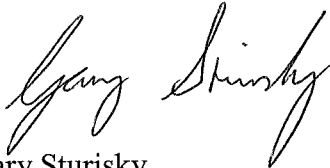
We have completed our review of the Parks and Recreation Department's Management and Maintenance of Existing Athletic Fields as outlined in our engagement letter dated April 22, 2007, under Contract No. 56545.

Our observations and recommendations noted during the performance of the review are presented in this report. Our procedures, which accomplished the project objectives, were performed through June 30, 2008 and have not been updated since that date. Our observations included in this report are the only matters that came to our attention, based on the procedures performed.

All data used during this review was obtained from representatives of the City of Houston Parks and Recreation Department and the City of Houston Office of the City Controller. Our work does not constitute an audit conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards, an examination of internal controls or other attestation or review services in accordance with standards established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA). Accordingly, we do not express an opinion or any other form of assurance on the reporting or compliance of the City of Houston Parks and Recreation Department.

Jefferson Wells is pleased to have assisted the City Controller, and we appreciate the cooperation received during this engagement from the City of Houston Parks and Recreation Department, as well as your office.

This report is intended solely for the information and use of the City, the City of Houston Parks and Recreation Department and the City Controller's Office, and is not intended to be used for any other purpose.



Gary Sturisky
Director – Internal Controls

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EXHIBIT I: Views of Responsible Officials

Objectives

Jefferson Wells was retained to perform a performance audit of the management and maintenance of the City of Houston's Parks and Recreation Department's ("PARD's") existing athletic fields. Our overall objective was to determine whether the management and maintenance of the existing athletic fields meet the PARD's mission statement, goals and/or standards. To determine this, our objectives included the following:

- Determining whether the PARD has a system to identify the effectiveness of the management and maintenance of the current athletic fields.
- Determining the accounting of the user fees collected, were they spent to enhance or improve the conditions of the fields for which they were collected, were they used for general maintenance and upkeep of other park facilities (e.g. pools, playgrounds), and/or were they returned to the General Fund.
- Determining whether there is any change in management and maintenance of fields for leagues paying with "sweat equity" and/or paying reduced user fees, versus those leagues paying full user fees.
- Selecting a sample of existing Level 1 and targeted Level 2 Adopted fields and performing physical observations to determine if the conditions of the fields reflect that proper maintenance procedures have been performed.
- Utilizing an online survey tool to obtain input related to management and maintenance of athletic fields from permitted athletic field users of record.
- Providing recommendations for improving the coordination, efficiency, and effectiveness of the management and maintenance of athletic fields to improve their appearance and functionality.

Scope

Our audit included the examination of related activities from April 2007 through May 2008. Included in our procedures were a review of maintenance procedures from April 2007 through March 2008, physical observations of fields during May 2008, and surveys of permitted users of athletic fields from May 2007 through May 2008.

Background

On March 21, 2007, City Council passed a motion to adjust fees for permitted use of City of Houston sports fields. This was the first increase in permitted fees since 1990. The Request for Council Action noted the following:

"Houston Parks and Recreation Department ("HPARD") recommends increasing fees for permitted use of City of Houston sports fields. HPARD is responsible for permitting the rental of its sports fields to both youth and adult sports organizations for league practice,

Executive Summary

games and tournaments. The demand for field space has increased dramatically with population growth and public zeal for competitive sports. The current fee schedule, which has been in place since 1990, does not support the level of field maintenance needed to protect the City’s assets and offer the quality facilities citizens expect. HPARD works diligently to accommodate as many groups as possible, a number of which are for-profit organizations.

The proposed fee increases will allow HPARD to plan needed field improvements and support a maintenance team whose sole responsibility is ball field maintenance. The proposed schedule is designed to optimize field usage for all groups who need them.

Fees may be waived for any non-profit youth organization that enters into an Adopt-A-Field “sweat equity” agreement and submits its schedule of programmed league play.

. . . The proposed fee schedule is based on three levels of field maintenance:

- Level 1 – Game/Tournament field – fenced / locked / irrigated / maintained daily
- Level 2 – Game/Practice field – fenced / not locked / maintained as permitted
- Level 3 – Recreational/Practice field – continuous public access / maintained on a 10-day cycle”

The motion was adopted by City Council with the following new fees becoming effective on July 1, 2007:

Fee Schedule as of July 1, 2007

LEVEL 1 FIELDS				
Baseball/Softball	Standard	Before 7 pm	\$12 / hr.	
		After 7 pm	\$20 / hr.	
	Youth League	Before 7 pm	\$ 6 / hr.	
		After 7 pm	\$10 / hr.	
Other Fields	Standard	Before 7 pm	\$10 / hr.	
		After 7 pm	\$16 / hr.	
	Youth League	Before 7 pm	\$ 6 / hr.	
		After 7 pm	\$10 / hr.	
LEVEL 2 FIELDS				
	Standard	Before 7 pm	\$ 8 / hr.	
		After 7 pm	\$12 / hr.	
	Youth League	Before 7 pm	\$ 4 / hr.	
		After 7 pm	\$ 8 / hr.	
LEVEL 3 FIELDS				
	Standard	Before 7 pm	\$ 6 / hr	With current “Adopt-a-Field” agreement
		After 7 pm	\$10 / hr	
	Youth League	Before 7 pm	\$ 2 / hr	\$ 0
		After 7 pm	\$ 6 / hr	\$ 0
Light key fee - \$5/ea.				

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Approach

In accomplishing the objectives of this review, we performed the following activities:

Mission Statement, Goals, and/or Standards

- Inquired as to the existence of PARD mission statements, goals, and/or standards for the management and maintenance of existing athletic fields.

Maintenance of Existing Athletic Fields

- Identified established maintenance schedules for the various levels (Level 1, 2, and 3) of existing athletic fields.
- Reviewed maintenance records on a sample basis for FY 2007 and FY 2008 through April 30, 2008 to determine if the established standards are being met.

Accounting for User Fees

- Conducted interviews with PARD Management and Finance personnel to determine the accounting of user fees collected.
- Reviewed appropriate accounting records to support the described use of the user fees collected.

Adopt-A-Sports Field “Sweat Equity” Program

- Conducted interviews with PARD Greenspace Management / Athletic Field Management Division (AFMD) personnel to gain an understanding of the “Adopt-A-Sports” field program (sweat equity program) and determine whether there is any change in management and maintenance of fields for leagues paying with “sweat equity” and/or paying reduced user fees versus those leagues paying full user fees.
- Determined if there are differences between what the volunteers commit to do and what the standards are for a Level 2 field and if there are differences, the course of action taken to ensure that the fields are maintained to Level 2 standards.
- Determined who is performing routine required inspections on the adopted fields, and what level of PARD oversight is in place.
- Reviewed inspection reports, on a sample basis, to determine if maintenance is being performed at the Level 2 standards. Determined what actions are taken if minimum maintenance standards are not being met.

Executive Summary

Physical Observation of Selected Level 1 and Level 2 Adopted Fields

- Selected a sample of six Level 1 fields and their respective maintenance schedules. Coordinated and supervised staff resources from the City Controller's Office Audit Division to perform physical observation of the fields during May 2008 to determine if maintenance procedures are being performed.
- Selected a sample of ten Level 2 Adopted fields and obtained their respective Adopt-A-Sports Field agreements. Coordinated and supervised resources from the City Controller's Office Audit Division to perform physical observation of the fields during May 2008. The appropriate maintenance and safety checklist was used to determine if each of the selected adopted fields were being maintained by the respective adoptee in accordance with their agreements.

User Surveys

- Utilized an online survey tool to obtain input from permitted users of record related to management and maintenance of athletic fields

Executive Summary

Summary of Results and Recommendations

Objective

Determine whether the management and maintenance of the existing athletic fields meet the PARD's mission statement, goals, and/or standards.

Results and Recommendations

The AFMD has developed a set of targeted goals/maintenance standards. See the following table for the targeted standards.

AFMD Targeted Maintenance Schedule

Level	Field Inspections	Litter Removal	Skinned Area Maintenance	Mowing / Trimming	Field Marking	Other Field Maintenance
Level 1 – Competitive/Tournament Fields	weekly	daily	daily	2 x / week Mar - Oct 1 x / week Nov - Feb	daily Mon - Fri	See Level 1 Warm Season Turf maintenance schedule
Level 2 – Recreational Fields	weekly	2x / week	2x / week	1x / week Mar - Oct as needed Nov - Feb	when permitted	See Level 2 Warm Season Turf maintenance schedule
Level 3 - Practice Fields	part of routine park maintenance schedule.	part of routine park maintenance schedule.	n/a	part of routine park maintenance schedule	1 x / season	n/a

Results

These stated goals/maintenance standards have been developed for internal purposes but have not been formally adopted. See further discussion of these to follow.

The AFMD is attempting to bring any adopted field up to a Level 2 standard, however, as of May 2008 any non-adoptee permitted one of these fields is only being charged the Level 3 rate.

Level 3 fields are not maintained by the AFMD. They are maintained by the Greenspace Management Division as part of the routine park maintenance schedule.

Recommendation

We recommend that the AFMD draft and formally adopt a mission statement specific to the management and maintenance of athletic fields.

Objective

Determine whether the PARD has a system to identify the effectiveness of the management and maintenance of the current athletic fields.

Results and Recommendations

We noted that the athletic fields are grouped into one of the following three (3) districts:

- 1) Memorial
- 2) Cullen
- 3) Herman Brown

Maintenance crews perform routine maintenance procedures based on a pre-set schedule for their District which describes the planned procedures (de-litter, drag, line, chalk, janitorial, mow, line, water) for certain days of the week. As maintenance procedures are performed, the crews record their activities by task code on daily maintenance work order forms.

The work order forms are routed to a central location and input into the Maintaining and Preparing Executive Reports (MAPPER) database management system.

As of January 1, 2008, the AFMD records identified a target of 23 Level 1 fields and 34 Level 2 fields (57 fields). From these, we selected a sample of 15 fields representing the different targeted levels at January 1, 2008, field types, and maintenance districts.

We obtained copies of all filed source maintenance work orders for the 13-month period reviewed from April 2007 through April 2008 and noted all days in which the recorded maintenance task codes on the individual work orders matched up to the respective targeted maintenance standard. Detail results by maintenance category are included in the Results and Recommendations section of this report. Summary results and recommendations are as follows:

Results

For the period reviewed, we noted no recorded activity for Field Inspections on the work order forms. In addition, for the categories of Litter Removal, Skinned Area Maintenance / Field Marking, and Mowing / Trimming, recorded instances of each specific field maintenance activity were insufficient to demonstrate compliance with the targeted maintenance standard. Also, for Other Field Maintenance Activities including fertilization, aeration, topdress, overseed, watering, and weed control, we noted only sporadic instances of these activities that were documented on the work order forms. These instances had little correlation to the targeted maintenance schedules provided by the AFMD.

Recommendations

- We recommend that an inspection form be created so that Field Supervisors can document inspections performed on Level 1 and targeted Level 2 fields on a weekly basis in accordance with the targeted maintenance standards. While establishing targeted maintenance standards for mowing/trimming, litter removed, skinned area maintenance, field marking, and turf area fertilization are important for planning purposes, the weekly field inspections can serve as a mitigating control to identify necessary field maintenance items on a real-time basis.
- We recommend the AFMD consider adjusting the targeted maintenance standards to reflect intended performance of each maintenance activity. In addition, the AFMD should communicate to PARD maintenance employees the importance of both performing and recording each maintenance activity on the work orders.
- We recommend that the AFMD consider adjusting their targeted maintenance standard for litter removal to an “as needed basis” to reflect intended performance of this activity. Litter removal is an important maintenance activity but is generally performed on an as-needed basis at each individual field. Maintenance employees may not record time spent on this activity on the work order forms if the time spent is nominal or there is no need to perform this activity. Also, as noted earlier, if inspections are being performed on a weekly basis, these inspections can serve as a mitigating control to identify instances in which additional litter removal activity needs to be performed.
- We recommend that the AFMD consider adjusting their targeted maintenance standard for mowing/trimming to reflect intended performance of this activity. During dormant months, mowing/trimming may need to be performed on an as-needed basis for both Level 1 and Level 2 fields. During the March through October period, seasonal weather variations and rainfall may affect the need to mow on a weekly basis.
- Due to concerns regarding fields being permitted for certain usages for which they were not designed or over usage of fields, we recommend that the AFMD be included in the approval process before athletic fields are permitted to users. This can be accomplished in the following ways:
 - The AFMD should provide the Reservation Office (the group responsible for issuing permits of athletic fields) a list of all known available athletic fields by type (baseball/softball, soccer, football, lacrosse etc.) and the appropriate level (Level 1, 2 or 3) at which they can be permitted.
 - If there is a concern about over usage of a field for sound maintenance practices, the AFMD should communicate with the Reservations Office to temporarily remove the field from the list of available fields to permit.

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- If the Reservations Office receives a request for a field that it considered temporarily unavailable or it is not on the list of known available athletic fields available for permit, they should obtain authorization from the AFMD that the field being requested is suitable for the requested permitted activity.

- We recommend that the AFMD work with the members of the Greenspace Management Division Information Technology group to produce management-friendly MAPPER reports downloaded into Excel on a weekly or monthly basis. These reports would be produced by maintenance district and could contain characteristics that would allow a user to quickly identify the number of days it has been since a specific maintenance task was last performed at an individual field and identify whether this is within a pre-defined acceptable range or in danger of being out of compliance with established maintenance standards. Based on specific conditions at a field, management could choose whether or not to perform the maintenance activity and/or whether the established standard is appropriate for that particular field.

- The AFMD hired an intern during the summer of 2008 to assist in drafting a formal set of policies and procedures for the AFMD. We recommend that the PARD provide whatever resources are necessary to facilitate this effort, perform appropriate review, and officially adopt these policies and procedures as soon as possible.

Objective

Determine the accounting of the user fees collected, were they spent to enhance or improve the conditions of the fields for which they were collected, were they used for general maintenance and upkeep of other park facilities (e.g. pools, playgrounds), and/or were they returned to the General Fund.

Results

Based on discussions with the Houston PARD Deputy Director, Management and Finance, review of supporting accounting records, and review of City Code of Ordinances Chapter 32 Parks and Recreation Article I, Section 32-7 Revenues from park operations, the user fees received for the Memorial, Brock, and Sharpstown golf facilities are dedicated specifically for those respective facilities. All other park user fees are deposited into the Parks Special Revenue Fund to be used exclusively for repairs, replacement, and renovation of parks' revenue producing facilities and equipment and for maintenance and operation of parks' revenue producing facilities and activities.

However, they are not specifically restricted to be used to enhance or improve the conditions of the specific fields for which they were collected.

Recommendation

We recommend that the PARD consider drafting and formally adopting a policy to restrict the user fees collected from existing athletic fields to be used specifically for the maintenance, repair, and improvement of athletic fields.

Objective

Determine whether there is any change in management and maintenance of fields for leagues paying with “sweat equity” and/or paying reduced user fees, versus those leagues paying full user fees.

Results and Recommendations

Results

Based on discussion with the Division Manager of the AFMD, the intent of the Adopt-A-Sports Field program is that the maintenance tasks that the Volunteers agree to perform are the same as the standards for a Level 2 field. However, there is no current defined course of action taken to ensure that fields are maintained to Level 2 standards.

Per review of the Adopt-A-Sports Field program letters of agreement for Spring 2008, we noted that the agreements do not contain provisions related to skinned area maintenance and other field maintenance activities including fertilization, aeration, topdress, overseed, watering, and weed control.

Recommendations

- We recommend that the PARD AFMD amend the current Letter of Agreement used when a youth organization elects to participate in the Adopt-A-Field (“Sweat Equity”) program to include all maintenance tasks intended to be performed for a field to meet the Level 2 standard.
- We recommend that the PARD AFMD implement their intended changes to the inspection process for adopted fields to include the following:
 - Require communication at the front end of the process (instead of just completing an application and then providing a signed Adopt-A-Sports Field Program Letter of Agreement to the PARD Adoption Program Administrator). Instead, prior to adopting a field, a face-to-face meeting should take place at the field between the volunteer and a representative from the AFMD to discuss specific maintenance requirements of the field(s) being adopted. The agreement could be amended to include the date this meeting took place.
 - The AFMD needs to provide the Adoptee the Maintenance & Safety Checklist used for inspections.
 - The Agreement needs to include a provision for the adoptees to mail or fax documentation of the weekly inspections they are required to perform as a condition of the Adopt-A-Sports Field program.

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- At the beginning of an adoption period, the AFMD should schedule periodic (approximately once every two months) follow-up inspections to determine if the adoptee is maintaining their field(s) in accordance with the agreement. If inspection issues are noted, the following would occur:
 - 1) The adoptee will have an opportunity to perform appropriate maintenance action to correct the issue
 - 2) The PARD AFMD will perform a follow-up inspection
 - 3) If a maintenance issue is a consistent problem upon inspection, the PARD will consider either rescinding or not renewing a volunteer's Adopt-A-Sports Field agreement.
- We recommend that Adopt-A-Sports Field program participants only be allowed to adopt a field that they intend to maintain at a Level 2 standard.
- We recommend that the AFMD establish a policy that does not allow for fields that are not available for use to be permitted or adopted. If fields are added to an already existing park, the AFMD can still give right of first refusal for the new fields to an incumbent organization already adopting fields at the existing park.

In addition, both the AFMD and the Adoptee should perform an additional review of Adopt-A-Sports Field agreements to ensure that the identifying information is correct in the executed agreements.

Objective

Selecting a sample of existing Level 1 and targeted Level 2 Adopted fields and performing physical observations to determine if the conditions of the fields reflect that proper maintenance procedures have been performed.

Results and Recommendations

- We obtained a listing of the 23 fields identified by the AFMD as Level 1 fields as of January 1, 2008 and the 41 fields adopted during the Spring 2008 (January 1 through June 30th).
- From the above fields identified, we selected 6 of the 23 Level 1 fields (26%) and 10 of the Adopted Fields (24%) representing the different types of fields (softball, baseball, soccer, football, rugby, and lacrosse) and different geographic locations (both by park name and Council Member district) for physical observation.
- We obtained the appropriate “Softball & Baseball Field” or “Soccer, Football, & Lacrosse Field” Maintenance and Safety Checklist used by the AFMD for each type of field.
- We coordinated and supervised staff resources from the City Controller’s Office Audit Division to perform physical observation of the fields during May 2008 to determine the condition of each field as follows:

The Maintenance and Safety Checklists contain detailed questions in several grouped categories. See questions to follow. As each individual field (or group of fields) was observed, each grouped category was assessed an overall acceptable, caution, or deficient rating. Definitions of each rating are as follows:

Acceptable – Observed condition of field(s) related to this category was acceptable.

Caution – Determination of observed condition of field(s) related to this category was less than desired and will become deficient over time if not addressed.

Deficient – Observed condition of field(s) related to this category was deficient.

For any rating assessed as either caution or deficient, provided comments as to why that rating was assessed.

Noted Trends and Recommendations from Physical Observations

Level 1 Field Trends

Based on the above observed conditions, the Level 1 fields maintained by the AFMD generally appear to be maintained in accordance with the targeted standards. However, condition ratings of either “Caution” or “Deficient” were given to individual categories at 4 of the 6 fields observed. See respective notes within the Results and Recommendations section for details regarding each type of field observed.

Recommendation

We recommend that the AFMD review each of the conditions noted for the Level 1 fields that were not rated “Acceptable” and perform the appropriate maintenance action to address the conditions noted.

Adopted Field Trends

Based on the above observed conditions, only 2 of the 15 fields maintained by Adopt-A-Sports Field program participants had “Acceptable” condition ratings for each category observed. See respective notes within the Results and Recommendations section for details regarding each type of field observed.

Recommendation

We recommend that the AFMD review each of the conditions noted for the Adopted Fields and meet with each respective adoptee to discuss what actions are necessary to address the conditions noted.

Executive Summary

Objective

Utilize an online survey tool to obtain input related to management and maintenance of athletic fields from permitted athletic field users of record.

Results and Recommendations

We conducted a survey utilizing a web-based survey tool to obtain input from permitted users of PARD athletic fields regarding the fields they used from May 1, 2007 to May 2008. The survey requested their feedback and recommendations on the quality and condition of the athletic fields used during this time period. To conduct the survey we performed the following procedures:

- Reviewed the PARD athletic field permitted user files and created an Excel database containing the permitted user name, league organization, field name and number rented, email address if available, and contact phone information.
- E-mail addresses were obtained for 113 permitted users and an additional 3 permitted users responded to phone inquiries and took the survey over the phone. A total of 116 surveys were distributed.
- In addition, based on the type of field permitted, the survey population was segregated into the following four categories:
 - 1) Group A – Softball & Baseball Level 1 Competitive/Tournament Fields
 - 2) Group B – Softball & Baseball Non-Level 1 Fields
 - 3) Group C – Soccer, Football, Lacrosse Level 1 Competitive/Tournament Fields
 - 4) Group D – Soccer, Football, Lacrosse Non- Level 1 Fields
- Survey questions were created using the general categories included in the Maintenance and Safety checklists and included both multiple choice responses and questions asking for user comments.
- On May 21st, the surveys were distributed via email to the four permitted user groups. Potential survey respondents were requested to respond no later than Sunday June 1st. Response results as of the close of the survey are as follows:

	Number emailed	Phone surveys	Number Distributed	Total Number Responded	Percent Returned
Group A - Softball & Baseball Level 1	9	-	9	4	44.4%
Group B - Softball & Baseball Non-Level 1	51	-	51	12	23.5%
Group C - Soccer, Football, Lacrosse & other Level 1	7	-	7	3	42.9%
Group D - Soccer, Football, Lacrosse & other Non-Level 1	46	3	49	18	36.7%
Overall	113	3	116	37	31.9%

Detail survey results by category, question, and comments where applicable are included in the **User Surveys section** of this report on pages 51 - 63.

Recommendation

We recommend that the AFMD review the survey responses in detail and pay particular attention to the general comments provided by the respondents. In instances in which the comments refer to specific athletic fields, we recommend that the AFMD inspect the field(s) to confirm items noted in the comments and perform the appropriate action to address the conditions noted.

Results and Recommendations

Mission Statement, Goals, and/or Standards

Recommendation – Adoption of Mission Statement

We recommend that the PARD AFMD draft and formally adopt a mission statement specific to the management and maintenance of athletic fields.

Basis for Recommendation

Based on inquires of PARD Management and Finance personnel and review of budget documents, the PARD does not have a mission statement adopted by the AFMD that would specifically apply to the management and maintenance of existing athletic fields.

At a more general level, per the Fiscal Year 2008 Budget, the PARD description and mission is as follows:

“The Parks and Recreation Department was created by city ordinance on March 15, 1916, as the Department of Public Parks and began with two facilities – Sam Houston Park and Hermann Park. Since that time, the number of parks has grown to over 337, which offer a wide variety of amenities including swimming pools, community centers, tennis and basketball courts, fitness centers, golf courses, walking/jogging trails, skate parks, dog parks, and nature areas. The Department also stewards the tree canopy in parks and on all City of Houston right-of-ways.

The mission of the Parks and Recreation Department is to enhance the quality of urban life by providing safe and well maintained parks and offering affordable programs for the community.”

The PARD is organized into the following 11 divisions:

- Office of the Director
- Management and Finance
- Park Administration
- Communications Office
- Grant, Legislation and Development
- Urban Park Rangers
- Facilities Development and Maintenance
- Zoological Gardens
- Recreations and Wellness
- Lake Houston Park
- Greenspace Management

Based on inquires of PARD Management and Finance personnel and review of budget documents, the majority of the ballfield expenditures are budgeted within the Greenspace Management Division PRD-Sportsfield Management District.

Mission Statement, Goals, and/or Standards

Per the Fiscal Year 2008 Budget, the Group Description and Group Objective of the Greenspace Management Division are as follows:

Group Description

“Maintain the department’s parks, sportsfields, ballfields, and trees. Apply herbicides to control weeds, plant flowers in parks and esplanades, maintain all city libraries and multi-purpose centers...”

Group Objective

“Maintain 10 days mowing cycle at parklands, ballfields and sportfields. De-litter parks on a 3 day & esplanades on a 7 day cycle. Apply herbicide and provides regular scheduled irrigation maintenance. Replace ornamental flowers at Downtown & Hermann Parks 3 times yearly.”

The 10 days mowing cycle and de-litter cycles noted above are tasks that are performed by the Greenspace Management Division of the PARD as part of routine park maintenance. These activities cover areas outside the actual athletic fields and non-athletic field routine park maintenance was not considered part of the performance audit. However, procedures related to mowing and de-litter activities related to athletic fields are addressed in the **Maintenance of Existing Athletic Fields section** to follow.

Goals and/or Standards

The AFMD has developed a set of targeted goals/maintenance standards. However, these goals/maintenance standards have been developed for internal purposes and have not been formally adopted. See further discussion of these in the **Maintenance of Existing Athletic Fields section** to follow.

Mission Statement, Goals, and/or Standards

Established Maintenance Levels for Athletic Fields

The PARD AFMD classifies their fields and associated features as follows:

Level 1 – Competitive / Tournament Fields

- Controlled access
- Lighting
- Irrigation system
- Bleacher capacity
- Limited use – based on 32 contact hours per week for rectangle field sports (soccer, football, lacrosse) and 50 contact hours per week for softball/baseball

Level 2 – Recreational Fields

- May have controlled access
- May have lighting
- May have irrigation system
- Bleacher capacity
- Limited use – based on 32 contact hours per week for rectangle field sports (soccer, football, lacrosse) and 50 contact hours per week for softball/baseball

Level 3 – Practice Fields

- Fields are available to the public except when reserved by a user group
- No restriction of use based on contact hours

Targeted Goals / Standards

As noted earlier, the AFMD has developed a set of targeted goals/maintenance standards. However, these goals/maintenance standards have been developed for internal purposes and have not been formally adopted. See the following table for the targeted standards:

Mission Statement, Goals, and/or Standards

AFMD Targeted Maintenance Schedule

	Field Inspections	Litter Removal	Skinned Area Maintenance	Mowing / Trimming	Field Marking	Other Field Maintenance
Level 1	weekly	daily	daily	2 x / week Mar - Oct 1 x / week Nov - Feb	daily Mon - Fri	See Level 1 Warm Season Turf maintenance schedule
Level 2	weekly	2x / week	2x / week	1x / week Mar - Oct as needed Nov - Feb	when permitted	See Level 2 Warm Season Turf maintenance schedule
Level 3	part of routine park maintenance schedule.	part of routine park maintenance schedule.	n/a	part of routine park maintenance schedule	1 x / season	n/a

The Department is attempting to bring any adopted field up to a Level 2 standard. However, as of May 2008, any non-adoptee permitted one of these fields is only being charged the Level 3 rate.

Level 3 fields are not maintained by the AFMD. They are maintained by the Greenspace Management Division as part of the routine park maintenance schedule.

Maintenance of Existing Athletic Fields

Availability of Maintenance Records

We noted the following with regard to the availability of maintenance work orders for review.

Recordkeeping

Per discussion with the Division Manager, Greenspace AFMD, prior to January 2007 there was not a separate AFMD. Instead, the fields were divided into the following five areas:

- 1) Southeast Division
- 2) Southwest Division
- 3) North Division
- 4) Memorial Region
- 5) Hermann Region

Each region kept their respective maintenance records and there was not a central repository. After the AFMD was officially formed in January 2007, pooled maintenance procedures did not begin until February/March 2007. Therefore, attempting to pull records prior to April 2007 would provide incomplete records at best.

After the initiation of pooled maintenance procedures, the maintenance work order forms began to be submitted to a central location at the AFMD's Cullen office.

Tracking of Maintenance Performed

Subsequent to the formation of the AFMD, the athletic fields are now grouped into one of the following 3 districts:

- 1) Memorial
- 2) Cullen
- 3) Herman Brown

Maintenance crews perform routine maintenance procedures based on a pre-set schedule for their District which describes the planned procedures (de-litter, drag, line, chalk, janitorial, mow, line, water) for certain days of the week. For each field visited, the maintenance crews obtain a blank work order form (recent versions of the form contain a pre-printed Park Identification Code (PIC) number and site name). As procedures are performed, the maintenance crews record their activities on the daily maintenance work order forms.

Each work order form contains 26 task codes and descriptions generic to all Greenspace areas and an additional 11 task codes specific to Athletic Field Maintenance. To comply with the established maintenance standards for athletic fields, portions of both sets of task codes are used. To complete a work order, employees handwrite their name, payroll number, hours and/or minutes to complete the task, task code, and equipment number (if

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applicable). In addition, a comment section is completed to provide a summary of the work performed.

On a daily basis, both the Cullen and Hermann Brown work orders are routed to the Cullen office location for the Division Manager of the AFMD (Division Manager) for his review. The Memorial location work orders are reviewed and initialed by the Field Supervisor and are provided to the Division Manager a minimum of twice a week. The Division Manager is routinely at the Memorial location several times a week and usually receives the work orders when he is on-site.

The Senior Office Assistant at the Cullen office then inputs the work orders by Park Identification Code (PIC) and task code into the MAPPER system.

Use of MAPPER

For over 20 years, the PARD has used the Maintaining and Preparing Executive Reports (MAPPER) database management system, a proprietary Unisys application, to track a variety of activities including grounds and facilities maintenance, permits, vendors, form 201 changes, and the summer foods program. In November 2005, the department temporarily migrated to the Azteca system to track maintenance. However, due to a cumbersome user entry process that was not considered necessary for tracking routine maintenance items, the department migrated back to MAPPER during late 2006 and early 2007.

Prior to our audit, the Division Manager was able to generate MAPPER reports by athletic field that detailed only the following three maintenance categories:

- 1) Litter and trash collection/removal
- 2) Trimming and edging
- 3) Mowing

During the audit, the Division Manager worked with internal PARD personnel to produce revised MAPPER reports which grouped all task codes in the following three maintenance districts:

- 1) Memorial Maintenance District (22 locations listed)
- 2) Hermann Brown District (33 locations listed)
- 3) Cullen District (25 locations listed)

Note: Within each district, non-athletic field locations are included. While these are subject to general Greenspace Management standards, they are not subject to specific athletic field maintenance standards.

Each report divides each respective District into its individual athletic field and non-athletic field locations and provides both detail by specific date performed and summarized number of hours performing tasks at each location by individual work order task.

Maintenance of Existing Athletic Fields

Review of Maintenance Records

We performed the following procedures to review maintenance records on a sample basis for fiscal years 2007 and 2008 to determine compliance with the established maintenance standards:

- We noted that for the period January 1, 2007 through December 31, 2007, the PARD – AFMD records identified 22 Level 1 fields and 15 Level 2 fields (37 fields).
- As of January 1, 2008, their targeted number of fields identifies 23 Level 1 fields and 34 Level 2 fields (57 fields).

Note: The increase in Level 2 fields is based on the AFMD's desire for several of the adopted fields to be maintained at a Level 2 status.

- Level 3 fields are not maintained by the AFMD. They are maintained by the Greenspace Management Division as part of the routine park maintenance schedule.
- Based on the above identified fields, we selected a sample of 15 fields representing the different targeted Levels at January 1, 2008, field types and maintenance districts as follows:

Sample Number	Target Level At 1/1/2008	Field Type	Field	Maintenance District
1	1	Soccer	Cullen #2	Cullen
2	1	Softball	Cullen #3	Cullen
3	2	Football	Blackhawk #1	Cullen
4	1	Baseball	Mason Nealon	Herman Brown
5	1	Soccer	Mason #5	Herman Brown
6	2	Baseball	Smokey Jasper #1	Herman Brown
7	2	Baseball	Squatty Lyons #1	Herman Brown
8	2	Baseball	Sylvester Turner #2	Herman Brown
9	2	Softball	American Legion	Herman Brown
10	2	Lacrosse	Sylvan Rodriguez #1	Herman Brown
11	2	Soccer	Tony Marron #2	Herman Brown
12	1	Baseball	Anderson Clements	Memorial
13	1	Baseball	Memorial Anderson	Memorial
14	1	Softball	Memorial #3	Memorial
15	2	Softball	Tim Hearn	Memorial

- Obtained copies of all filed source maintenance work orders for the 13-month period reviewed from April 2007 through April 2008 and noted all days in which the recorded maintenance task codes on the individual work orders matched the respective targeted maintenance standard.

Maintenance of Existing Athletic Fields

Results of Procedures Performed

Based on the above testwork, we noted the following with regard to the results of our testwork and related recommendations to each respective maintenance category:

Maintenance Category: Field Inspections

Recommendation

We recommend that an inspection form be created so that Field Supervisors can document inspections performed on Level 1 and targeted Level 2 fields on a weekly basis in accordance with the targeted maintenance standards. While establishing targeted maintenance standards for mowing, litter removed, skinned area maintenance, field marking, and turf area fertilization are important for planning purposes, the weekly field inspections can serve as a mitigating control to identify necessary field maintenance items on a real-time basis.

Furthermore, we recommend that the AFMD consider adjusting their targeted maintenance standard to reflect intended performance of this activity. In addition, the AFMD should communicate to Parks maintenance employees the importance of both performing and recording this activity on the work orders.

Basis for Recommendation

The Parks Department has a targeted standard to perform field inspections for both Level 1 and targeted Level 2 fields on a weekly basis. However, there is not currently a system in place to document these weekly field inspections.

For the 13-month period reviewed from April 2007 through April 2008, we noted no recorded activity on the work order forms. Based on this, recorded instances of this field maintenance activity were insufficient to demonstrate compliance with this targeted maintenance standard.

The Division Manager of the Greenspace AFMD has indicated that he would like to have the Field Supervisors complete an inspection on a monthly basis. He would also like to develop a quick form that the maintenance crews could complete on either a daily or weekly basis.

Maintenance of Existing Athletic Fields

Maintenance Category: Litter Removal

Recommendation

Litter removal is an important maintenance activity but is generally performed on an as-needed basis at each individual field. Maintenance employees may not record time spent on this activity on the work order forms if the time spent is nominal or there is no need to perform this activity. We recommend that the AFMD consider adjusting their targeted maintenance standard to an “as needed basis” to reflect intended performance of this activity.

Also, the AFMD should communicate to PARD maintenance employees the importance of both performing and recording this activity on the work orders. As noted earlier, if inspections are being performed on a weekly basis, these inspections can serve as a mitigating control to identify instances in which additional litter removal activity needs to be performed.

Basis for Recommendation

The AFMD has a targeted standard to perform litter removal on a daily basis for Level 1 fields and twice per week for targeted Level 2 fields. For the 13-month period reviewed from April 2007 through April 2008, we noted the following at each respective field:

#	Target Level 1/1/08	Type	Maintenance District	Field	April 2007 through March 2008			Days activity in April 2008
					Months with no activity	Months with 1-6 days activity	Months with 7-15 days activity	
1	1	Soccer	Cullen	Cullen #2	5	7	-	10
2	1	Softball	Cullen	Cullen #3	3	9	-	21
3	2	Football	Cullen	Blackhawk #1	-	-	-	-
4	1	Baseball	H. Brown	Mason Nealon	6	5	1	9
5	1	Soccer	H. Brown	Mason #5	4	7	1	1
6	2	Baseball	H. Brown	Smokey Jasper #1	10	2	-	1
7	2	Baseball	H. Brown	Squatty Lyons #1	8	4	See Note	-
8	2	Baseball	H. Brown	Sylvester Turner #2	10	2	-	5
9	2	Softball	H. Brown	Amer. Legion	12	-	-	-
10	2	Lacrosse	H. Brown	Sylvan Rodriguez #1	12	-	See Note	-
11	2	Soccer	H. Brown	Tony Marron #2	12	-	-	-
12	1	Baseball	Memorial	Anderson Clements	6	5	1	13
13	1	Baseball	Memorial	Memorial Anderson	6	6	-	7
14	1	Softball	Memorial	Memorial #3	7	3	2	9
15	2	Softball	Memorial	Tim Hearn	6	3	3	15

Note: Both Squatty Lyons #1 and Sylvan Rodriguez #1 were adopted fields during the period tested and per the adoption agreement, these activities are supposed to be performed by the adoptee.

Based on the above, recorded instances of this field maintenance activity were insufficient to demonstrate compliance with this targeted maintenance standard.

Maintenance of Existing Athletic Fields

Maintenance Category: Skinned Area Maintenance / Field Marking

Recommendation

While establishing targeted maintenance standards for skinned area maintenance is important for planning purposes, performing weekly field inspections can serve as a mitigating control to identify necessary field maintenance items on a real-time basis. We recommend that an inspection form be created so that Field Supervisors can document inspections performed on Level 1 and targeted Level 2 fields on a weekly basis.

Furthermore, we recommend that the AFMD consider adjusting their targeted maintenance standard to reflect intended performance of skinned area maintenance. Also, the AFMD should communicate to PARD maintenance employees the importance of both performing and recording both skinned area maintenance and field marking activities on the work orders.

Basis for Recommendation

The AFMD has a targeted standard to perform skinned area maintenance on a daily basis for Level 1 fields and twice per week for targeted Level 2 fields. In addition, they also have a targeted standard to perform field marking daily from Monday through Friday for Level 1 fields and on days when a Level 2 field is permitted. Field marking is often commingled with other skinned area maintenance on the work order forms and was, therefore, tested in conjunction with skinned area maintenance. For the 13-month period reviewed from April 2007 through April 2008, we noted the following at each respective field:

#	Target Level 1/1/08	Type	Maintenance District	Field	April 2007 through March 2008			Days activity in April 2008
					Months with no activity	Months with 1-6 days activity	Months with 7-18 days activity	
1	1	Soccer	Cullen	Cullen #2	7	5	-	1
2	1	Softball	Cullen	Cullen #3	4	5	3	18
3	2	Football	Cullen	Blackhawk #1	8	4	-	-
4	1	Baseball	H. Brown	Mason Nealon	3	8	1	12
5	1	Soccer	H. Brown	Mason #5	4	7	1	2
6	2	Baseball	H. Brown	Smokey Jasper #1	8	4	-	2
7	2	Baseball	H. Brown	Squatty Lyons #1	7	5	See Note	-
8	2	Baseball	H. Brown	Sylvester Turner #2	6	6	-	7
9	2	Softball	H. Brown	Amer. Legion	11	1	-	-
10	2	Lacrosse	H. Brown	Sylvan Rodriguez #1	12	-	See Note	-
11	2	Soccer	H. Brown	Tony Marron #2	12	-	-	-
12	1	Baseball	Memorial	Anderson Clements	6	3	3	16
13	1	Baseball	Memorial	Memorial Anderson	4	7	1	7
14	1	Softball	Memorial	Memorial #3	5	3	4	15
15	2	Softball	Memorial	Tim Hearn	5	4	3	15

Note: Both Squatty Lyons #1 and Sylvan Rodriguez #1 were adopted fields during the period tested and per the adoption agreement, these activities are supposed to be performed by the adoptee.

Based on the above, recorded instances of this field maintenance activity were insufficient to demonstrate compliance with this targeted maintenance standard.

Maintenance of Existing Athletic Fields

Maintenance Category: Mowing / Trimming

Recommendation

While establishing targeted maintenance standards for mowing/trimming is important for planning purposes, performing weekly field inspections can serve as a mitigating control to identify necessary field maintenance items on a real-time basis. We recommend that an inspection form be created so that Field Supervisors can document inspections performed on Level 1 and targeted Level 2 fields on a weekly basis.

Furthermore, we recommend that the AFMD consider adjusting their targeted maintenance standard to reflect intended performance of this activity. During dormant months, mowing/trimming may need to be performed on an as-needed basis for both Level 1 and Level 2 fields.

During the March through October period, seasonal weather variations and rainfall may affect the need to mow on a weekly basis. In addition, the AFMD should communicate to PARD maintenance employees the importance of both performing and recording this activity on the work orders.

Basis for Recommendation

The AFMD has a targeted standard to perform mowing/trimming twice per week from March through October and once per week from November through February for Level 1 fields. For targeted Level 2 fields, the targeted standard is once per week from March through October and on an as-needed basis from November through February.

Based on this, Level 1 fields should not have any months with zero activity and should have a minimum of 8 days of activity (twice per week) in the eight months from March through October. Level 2 fields should have a minimum of 4 days of activity (once per week). For the 13 month period tested from April 2007 through April 2008, we noted the following at each respective field:

Maintenance of Existing Athletic Fields

#	Target Level 1/1/08	Type	Maintenance District	Field	April 2007 through March 2008			Days activity in April 2008
					Months with no activity	Months with 1-6 days activity	Months meeting standard	
1	1	Soccer	Cullen	Cullen #2	7	5	0	5
2	1	Softball	Cullen	Cullen #3	4	8	0	8
3	2	Football	Cullen	Blackhawk #1	12	-	0	-
4	1	Baseball	H. Brown	Mason Nealon	6	6	0	2
5	1	Soccer	H. Brown	Mason #5	5	7	0	-
6	2	Baseball	H. Brown	Smokey Jasper #1	8	4	0	-
7	2	Baseball	H. Brown	Squatty Lyons #1	8	4	See Note	-
8	2	Baseball	H. Brown	Sylvester Turner #2	8	4	0	6
9	2	Softball	H. Brown	Amer. Legion	12	-	0	-
10	2	Lacrosse	H. Brown	Sylvan Rodriguez #1	12	-	See Note	-
11	2	Soccer	H. Brown	Tony Marron #2	12	-	0	-
12	1	Baseball	Memorial	Anderson Clements	5	7	0	4
13	1	Baseball	Memorial	Memorial Anderson	4	8	0	2
14	1	Softball	Memorial	Memorial #3	5	7	0	15
15	2	Softball	Memorial	Tim Hearn	7	5	0	2

Note: Both Squatty Lyons #1 and Sylvan Rodriguez #1 were adopted fields during the period tested and per the adoption agreement, these activities are supposed to be performed by the adoptee.

Based on the above, recorded instances of this field maintenance activity were insufficient to demonstrate compliance with this targeted maintenance standard.

Maintenance of Existing Athletic Fields

Maintenance Category: Other Field Maintenance Activities

Recommendation

While establishing targeted maintenance standards for fertilization, aeration, topdress, overseeding, watering, and weed control (general turf maintenance) are important for planning purposes, performing weekly field inspections can serve as a mitigating control to identify necessary field maintenance items on a real-time basis. We recommend that an inspection form be created so that Field Supervisors can document inspections performed on Level 1 and targeted Level 2 fields on a weekly basis.

Furthermore, we recommend that the AFMD consider adjusting their targeted maintenance standard to reflect intended performance of these general turf maintenance activities.

Also, the AFMD should communicate to parks maintenance employees the importance of both performing and recording the specific turf maintenance activities in the appropriate categories on the work orders.

Basis for Recommendation

For other turf maintenance activities for both Level 1 and Level 2 fields, the AFMD has a targeted maintenance schedule to cover the months in which the following activities are to be performed as follows:

Level 1 Warm Season Turf Maintenance Schedule

Month	Fertilization	Aeration	Topdress	Overseed	Mowing	Watering	Weed Control
March	X				X	as needed	X
April					X	as needed	X
May	X	X	X		X	X	
June	X				X	X	X
July		X			X	X	
Aug	X				X	X	X
Sept		X	X		X	X	X
Oct	X	X		X	X	X	
Nov				X	X	as needed	
Dec					X	as needed	
Jan	X				X	as needed	
Feb					X	as needed	

X – denotes a month in which this activity should be performed

Maintenance of Existing Athletic Fields

Level 2 Warm Season Turf Maintenance Schedule

Month	Fertilization	Aeration	Topdress	Overseed	Mowing	Watering	Weed Control
March					X	as needed	
April	X				X	as needed	X
May		X	X		X	X	
June	X				X	X	X
July		X			X	X	
Aug					X	X	X
Sept	X	X	X		X	X	X
Oct				X	X	X	
Nov					X	as needed	
Dec					X	as needed	
Jan					X	as needed	
Feb					X	as needed	

X – denotes a month in which this activity should be performed

During our review of work orders for the 13-month period reviewed from April 2007 through April 2008, we noted that only sporadic instances of these maintenance activities were documented on the work order forms. These instances had little correlation to the maintenance schedules above. Based on these results, recorded instances of this field maintenance activity were insufficient to demonstrate compliance with this targeted maintenance standard.

Other Observations

Recommendation - Approval of Fields to be Permitted

We recommend that the AFMD be included in the approval process before athletic fields are permitted to users. This can be accomplished in the following ways:

- The AFMD should provide the Reservation Office (the group responsible for issuing permits of athletic fields) a list of all known available athletic fields by type (baseball/softball, soccer, football, lacrosse etc.) and the appropriate level (Level 1, 2 or 3) at which they can be permitted.
- If there is a concern about over usage of a field in regard to sound maintenance practices (i.e. a need for a field to have no activity for a period of time to allow the field to regenerate), the AFMD should communicate with the Reservations Office to temporarily remove the field from the list of available fields to permit.
- If the Reservations Office receives a request for a field that it considered temporarily unavailable or it is not on the list of known available athletic fields available for permit, they should obtain authorization from the AFMD that the field being requested is suitable for the requested permitted activity.

Basis for Recommendation

Based on discussion with representatives within the AFMD, they are not currently part of the approval process for issuing permits for athletic fields. This creates the following concerns:

- Fields can be permitted for a certain usage for which they are not designed. In these instances, the AFMD often needs a certain amount of time to prepare a field. A user might be paying the permitting fees for a certain type and level of field and has a certain expectation that the field may not meet.
- In addition, there is also a concern about over usage of a field in regard to sound maintenance practices (i.e. a need for a field to have no activity for a period of time to allow the field to regenerate). Fields that need an idle period to regenerate have often already been permitted without authorization from the AFMD.

Maintenance of Existing Athletic Fields

Recommendation - Use of MAPPER

We recommend that the AFMD work with the members of the Greenspace Management Division Information Technology group to produce management friendly MAPPER reports downloaded into Excel on a weekly or monthly basis. These reports would be produced by Maintenance District and could contain the following characteristics:

On an individual field basis contain the following:

- Park identification code (PIC) used to identify specific parks
- All task codes included on the work order forms
- Date performed, employee number, employee rate, and hours incurred to perform the specific task
- Field location
- For each task code category, the number of days since this task was last performed
- A separate column denoting the acceptable range of days between the last time the task was performed and when it needs to be performed again to comply with the established maintenance standards
- An additional column that compares the number of days since the task was last performed to the acceptable range and indicates through either color coding or a statement whether this task is in compliance with established maintenance standards, within a range considered to be in danger of being out of compliance or out of compliance.

This column would be useful as a management tool to quickly identify fields that need maintenance to stay in compliance with established standards. Based on specific conditions at a field, management could choose whether or not to perform the maintenance activity and/or whether the established standard is appropriate for that particular field.

In order for the above reporting to be effective, the AFMD would need to communicate to Parks maintenance employees the importance of both performing and recording maintenance activities in the appropriate task codes on the work orders.

Basis for Recommendation

Prior to our audit, the Division Manager was able to generate MAPPER reports by athletic field that only detailed the following three maintenance categories:

- 1) Litter and trash collection/removal
- 2) Trimming and edging
- 3) Mowing

Maintenance of Existing Athletic Fields

In addition, based on our review of maintenance work orders tested, recorded instances of field maintenance activities were sporadic for certain task codes. In other instances, the majority of procedures performed were combined into a general “Ballfield Maintenance All” category. As a result, the current MAPPER reports or hard copy work orders are insufficient to demonstrate compliance with targeted maintenance standards.

Based on the revised MAPPER reports provided during our audit and discussion with members of the Greenspace Management Division Information Technology group, MAPPER could be designed to produce maintenance reports by district for all task codes on a routine basis.

Recommendation – Formal Policies and Procedures

The AFMD hired an intern during the summer of 2008 to assist in drafting a formal set of policies and procedures for the AFMD. We recommend that the PARD provide whatever resources are necessary to facilitate this effort, perform appropriate review, and officially adopt these policies and procedures as soon as possible.

Basis for Recommendation

Based on discussion with representatives within the AFMD, due to Division only being in existence since the early part of 2007, it has been operating with an informal set of proposed policies and procedures. The maintenance standards in effect are part of a proposal that has not been fully adopted. In addition, the procedures for performing maintenance and safety inspections on athletic fields and the procedures for communication with Adopt-A-Sports Field Program participants are still being determined as the program evolves.

Determination of the Accounting of User Fees Collected

Based on discussions with the Houston PARD Deputy Director, Management and Finance and review of supporting accounting records, we determined that user fees collected for the existing athletic fields are not specifically restricted to be used to enhance or improve the conditions of the specific fields for which they were collected.

Recommendation

We recommend that the PARD consider drafting and formally adopting a policy to restrict the user fees collected from existing athletic fields to be used specifically for the maintenance, repair, and improvement of athletic fields.

Basis for Determination

Based on discussions with the PARD Deputy Director Management and Finance and review of supporting accounting records, we noted the following with regard to the accounting of user fees collected:

Summary of PARD Fund Structure

The PARD is budgeted through the use of the following:

1) General Fund (Fund No. 1000 Bus. Area No. 3600)

For FY 2008, the overall budget included \$62.8 million of expenditures allocated among the following eleven divisions:

Office of the Director	Management and Finance
Park Administration	Communications Office,
Grant, Legislation and Development	Urban Park Rangers
Recreations and Wellness	Zoological Gardens
Lake Houston Park	Greenspace Management
Facilities Development and Maintenance	

Furthermore, the majority of the ball field expenditures are budgeted within the Greenspace Management Division PRD-Sportsfield Management District 3600130013.

2) Parks Special Revenue Fund (Fund No. 2100 Bus. Area No. 3600)

For FY 2008, the overall budget included \$7.7 million of expenditures

Accounting for User Fees

Sources of Funds (Revenues)

Per the City’s budget document, “In 1981, City Council directed that revenue from revenue generating activities should be deposited in a “Parks Special Revenue Fund.” These funds should be used for repairs, replacement, and renovation of park’s revenue producing facilities and equipment, and for maintaining and operation of parks’ revenue producing facilities and activities.

Presently, revenue-generating activities include, but are not limited to:

- Golf courses;
- Tennis, fitness, and garden centers;
- Community center and ball field rentals;
- Adult sports league registrations;
- Youth summer enrichment programs; and
- Park concessions.”

Revenue associated with ball field rentals are coded into the following categories:

- 1) Recreational Sports & Education Program (426170) – this is used to track a combination of leisure programs, adult sports league registration (\$200-\$300/team), summer enrichment program revenue, and light key fees (\$5 each).
- 2) Park Facility Use Fees (426440) – this is used to track pool rental fees and ball field rental fees received for tournaments, leagues, and daily practice at both youth and adult rates. Field rental fees vary from \$2/hour to \$20/hour based on Level of Field (1, 2, and 3), type and time of day rented.

The following table illustrates the estimated actual amount for FY 2007, the budgeted amount for FY08, and the actual amount year to date for the first 9 months of FY 2008.

G/L	Description	Actual FY07	Budget FY08	FY 08 Actual through 3/31/2008
426170	Leisure Programs	37,880		28,569
426170	Adult Team Registration	319,230		198,044
426170	Summer Enrichment Prog	92,023		62,701
426170	Other			207
	Total Rec. Sport & Edu. Prog.	449,133	365,000	289,520
426440	Pool Rentals	10,905		1,472
426440	Leisure Programs	175,632		229,130
426440	Other	345		-
	Total Park Facility Use Fees	186,882	170,000	230,601
	Total	636,015	535,000	520,121

Accounting for User Fees

Expenditures

In the FY2008 budget, the PARD- Sportsfield Management District 360013001 General Fund had total budgeted expenditures of \$896,529 as detailed below:

Total Personnel Services	873,329
Total Supplies	18,400
Total Other Services and Charges	4,800
Total General Fund	896,529

In addition to the above, certain FY2008 supplies expenditures not included in the General Fund Budget above were budgeted directly out of the Parks Special Revenue Fund as detailed below:

Chemical Gases & Special Fluids	100,000
Cleaning & Sanitary Supplies	15,000
Recreational Supplies	15,800
Landscaping & Gardening Supplies	75,000
Small Tools & Minor Equipment	5,000
Miscellaneous Parts & Supplies	3,000
Total Parks Special Revenue Fund	213,800

Total General Fund	896,529
Total Special Revenue Fund	213,800
Total Sportsfield Expenditures	1,110,329

Comparison of Budgeted Revenues versus Budgeted Expenditures

Based on the above, the PARD – Sportsfield Management District had FY 2008 budgeted revenues of \$535,000 compared to total budgeted expenditures of \$1,110,329.

Accounting for User Fees

Parks and Recreation Department FY2008 Budgeted Revenues

Based on a review of the FY2008 budget, we noted the following budgeted revenues:

Fund	Cost Center	Description	Commit Item	Line Item	FY 2008 Budget	FY 2008 Budget
				FY 2008 Budget		
General Fund	3600010001	PRD - Director Office *				759,200
Special Revenue	3600020004	PRD - Financial Services				
		Special Event Permits	421530	75,000		
		Closed Use Permits	421540	60,000		
		Recreation Sports & Education Program	426170	365,000		
		Admission and User Fees	426200	9,000		
		Building Space Rental Fees	426420	75,500		
		Park Facility Use Fees	426440	170,000		
		Park Equipment Rental Fees	426450	4,600		
		Miscellaneous Fines & Forfeitures	428090	300		
		Interest on Pooled Investments	432010	95,000		
		Temporary Park Concessions	443010	40,000		
		Terminal Concession Agreements	443020	255,000		
		Vending Machine Concessions	443160	50,000		
		Concession Penalty & Interest	443180	300		
		Recoveries & Refunds	452020	1,000		
		Miscellaneous Revenue	452030	2,000		
		Other Operating Transfers In	490080	843,200		
		Total PRD - Financial Services				2,045,900
Special Revenue	3600100001	PRD - Houston Garden Center				20,200
Special Revenue	3600110001	PRD - Golf Admin.				175,000
Special Revenue	3600110002	PRD - Sharpstown Golf Course				1,223,900
Special Revenue	3600110003	PRD - Brock Golf Course				552,300
Special Revenue	3600110004	PRD - Gus Wortham Golf Course				680,700
Special Revenue	3600110005	PRD - Homer Ford Tennis Center				21,200
Special Revenue	3600110006	PRD - Memorial Tennis Center				139,000
Special Revenue	3600110007	PRD - Lee LeClear Tennis Center				59,600
Special Revenue	3600110008	PRD - Memorial Fitness Center				21,000
Special Revenue	3600120001	PRD - Memorial Pro Shop Admin.				2,842,600
Special Revenue	3600120002	PRD - Memorial Course Maint.				500
Special Revenue	3600130001	PRD - Ground Maint. Admin.				10,000
Special Revenue	3600140001	PRD - Lake Houston				40,000
		Total Special Revenue Funds				7,831,900
		Total General Fund plus Special Revenue Funds				8,591,100

* \$700,000 of budgeted revenue related to the Youth Enrichment Program funded by the CDBG Grant No. B-07-MC-48-0018 and \$59,200 related to Operation Gang Together program from the Drug Forfeiture Funds administered by the City of Houston Police Department.

Accounting for User Fees

Ordinances

Per the City Code of Ordinances Chapter 32 Parks and Recreation Article I, Section 32-7 Revenues from park operations,

“All revenues derived by the city in any manner from park user fees as defined in section 32-69 of this Code and from concession agreements authorized under section 32-8(b) (collectively denoted “park revenues”), except revenues from Memorial, Brock, and Sharpstown Park golf facilities, shall be regularly remitted to the city controller with an accounting thereof. Unless otherwise expressly provided by ordinance or state law, park revenues shall be deposited in the “park’s” special revenue fund to be used exclusively for repairs, replacement and renovation of parks’ revenue producing facilities and equipment and for maintenance and operation of parks’ revenue producing facilities and activities.

1. One hundred percent of the park revenues derived at the Memorial, Brock, and Sharpstown Park golf facilities shall be deposited in special revenue funds to be used exclusively for the maintenance, operation and improvements of the Memorial, Brock, and Sharpstown Park golf facilities, respectively.”

Accounting for User Fees

Based on the above Ordinance, the user fees received for the Memorial, Brock, and Sharpstown golf facilities are dedicated specifically for those respective facilities. All other park user fees are deposited into the Parks Special Revenue Fund to be used exclusively for repairs, replacement and renovation of parks’ revenue producing facilities and equipment and for maintenance and operation of parks’ revenue producing facilities and activities. **However, they are not specifically restricted to be used to enhance or improve the conditions of the specific fields for which they were collected.**

Adopt-A-Sports Field “Sweat Equity” Program

Differences in Management and Maintenance of Athletic Fields for Leagues Paying with “Sweat Equity” Versus Leagues Paying Full User Fees

Based on discussion with the Division Manager of the AFMD, the intent of the Adopt-A-Sports Field program is that the maintenance tasks that the Volunteers agree to perform are the same as the standards for a Level 2 field. However, there is no current defined course of action taken to ensure that fields are maintained to Level 2 standards.

Per review of the Adopt-A-Sports Field program letters of agreement for spring 2008, we noted that the agreements do not contain provisions related to skinned area maintenance and other field maintenance activities including fertilization, aeration, topdress, overseed, watering, and weed control.

Amend the Adopt-A-Sports Field Program Letter of Agreement

Recommendation

We recommend that the PARD AFMD amend the current Letter of Agreement used when a youth organization elects to participate in the Adopt-A-Field (“Sweat Equity”) program to include all maintenance tasks intended to be performed for a field to meet the Level 2 standard.

Basis for Recommendation

When an organization elects to participate in the Adopt-A-Field (“Sweat Equity”) program, both the Director of the PARD and a volunteer representative from the organization sign a Letter of Agreement. Language included in the Letter of Agreement is as follows:

LETTER OF AGREEMENT

This agreement is made at Houston, Texas on XXXXXXXX, 2008 by and between the City of Houston Parks and Recreation Department (“Department”) and XXXXXXXX (“Volunteer”) regarding a sports field located in XXXXX Park, XXXXXXXX, Houston, TX XXXXX.

1. **PURPOSE:** The purpose of this Agreement is to encourage volunteerism and to develop community pride and stewardship in the City of Houston park system. The Adopt-A-Sports Field program encourages individuals, businesses and community groups to partner as volunteers with the City of Houston Parks and Recreation Department to build and maintain a premier park system. Adoption of a sports field shall not connote the transfer of public parks and/or park spaces to any community, corporate or individual, for private or commercial use. The adopted field shall continue to be open to all citizens and visitors of Houston.

Adopt-A-Sports Field “Sweat Equity” Program

2. **PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE:** The period of performance for this agreement shall be from XXXXXXXX, 200X to XXXXXX, 30, 200X renewable annually or until it is prior revoked by either party upon thirty days advance written notification.

3. **STIPULATION OF TASKS:** The Volunteer will be responsible for the following:
 - Assist with the maintenance and care of XXXXX Park Ball Fields # XXXX to include:
 - a) Field inspection – Weekly;
 - b) De-littering each day at the conclusion of your use;
 - c) Line marking the ball fields, as needed;
 - d) Mowing and edging – Weekly (March-June) and, as needed (January-February); and,
 - e) Field amendments with approval of Athletic Field Management Staff.

 - Supervise and monitor all persons assisting Volunteer with maintenance and care of the sports field.

 - Furnish and perform proper maintenance and upkeep of all supplies and equipment required to care for the above amenities.

 - Store all supplies and equipment off site.

 - Report any safety concerns to Anthony Wise, Division Manager for Athletic Field Management 281-578-0691.

 - Submit all proposed improvement plans (drawn to scale) for Parks Department approval and technical assistance to: Deputy Director, Greenspace Management Division, 2999 S. Wayside, Houston, TX 77023. Note: All construction projects require approval from Facilities Development and Maintenance, and may require execution of Right of Entry agreement.

 - Work with Ball field Permits office 713-845-1206 to schedule ball field use.

The Department will be responsible for the following:

- Continuing its maintenance schedule outside the sports field lines.

- Providing technical assistance on sports field improvement projects. Please call Tony Wise, Division Manager, Grounds Maintenance, at 281-578-0691 to coordinate on-site assistance.

- Providing guidelines and vendor recommendations for purchasing equipment, materials or field enhancers that may be used to improve the sports field.

Adopt-A-Sports Field “Sweat Equity” Program

- Providing regulations and approval for appropriate size and dimensions for improvements to the sports field.
- Recognition of XXXXXXXXXX in our Adopt-A-Sports Field program via park signage for the term of the adoption or as long as its maintenance continues according to this agreement.

Field Amendments

While not specifically defined within the Letter of Agreement, the AFMD defines field amendments to include any addition to a field including infield dirt, infield clay, calcined clay (a product used on the skinned areas of baseball and softball fields to improve drainage), fertilizer, topsoil, sand, etc. that is used to improve the overall condition of a field.

Communication with Leagues Regarding Maintenance Procedures

During the November/December period each year, representatives from the PARD invite all adult and youth group league representatives to a meeting to discuss the specific maintenance activities to be performed by the PARD. Invitees are compiled from the list of permitted users of athletic fields during the previous year. Specifically discussed are the resources available to assist leagues in maintaining fields. These include the use of PARD personnel to assist in tasks requiring the usage of heavy equipment and the scheduling of the staff to transport equipment to respective field locations. For example, if a league has purchased dirt, clay, fertilizer, etc. that requires the use of specialized equipment to apply, the PARD will provide opportunities for the leagues to receive assistance from the PARD if properly scheduled.

Inspection of Adopted Fields and Communication of Maintenance Standards to Participants

Recommendation

We recommend that the PARD AFMD implement their intended changes to the inspection process for adopted fields to include the following:

- Require communication at the front end of the process (instead of just completing an application and then providing a signed Adopt-A-Sports Field Program Letter of Agreement to the PARD Adoption Program Administrator). Instead, prior to adopting a field, a face-to-face meeting should take place at the field between the volunteer and a representative from the AFMD to discuss specific maintenance requirements of the field(s) being adopted. The agreement could be amended to include the date this meeting took place.
- The AFMD needs to provide the Adoptee the Maintenance & Safety Checklist used for inspections.

Adopt-A-Sports Field “Sweat Equity” Program

- The Agreement needs to include a provision for the adoptees to mail or fax documentation of the weekly inspections they are required to perform as a condition of the Adopt-A-Sports Field program.
- At the beginning of an adoption period, the AFMD should schedule periodic (approximately once every two months) follow-up inspections to determine if the adoptee is maintaining their field(s) in accordance with the agreement. If inspection issues are noted, the following would occur:
 - 1) The adoptee will have an opportunity to perform appropriate maintenance action to correct the issue
 - 2) The PARD AFMD will perform a follow-up inspection
 - 3) If a maintenance issue is a consistent problem upon inspection, the PARD will consider either rescinding or not renewing a volunteer’s Adopt-A-Sports Field agreement.

Basis for Recommendation

A formal procedure for inspecting adopted fields is not currently in place. During May 2008, the Division Manager of the AFMD either performed himself or coordinated the inspections of approximately 50 baseball & softball type fields using the Maintenance & Safety checklists. However, these checklists had not previously been shared with the Adopt-A-Sports Field participants and, therefore, the results were not shared with the adoptees. The AFMD plans to share the checklists with the adoptees as they improve their internal procedures when the July 1 through December 31, 2008 adoptions begin. The AFMD plans to schedule periodic follow-up inspections every two months.

Limiting Adoption only to Fields Intended to be Maintained to Level 2 Standards

Recommendation

We recommend that Adopt-A-Sports Field program participants only be allowed to adopt a field that they intend to maintain at a Level 2 standard.

Basis for Recommendation

The AFMD has noted instances in which it appears an organization is adopting multiple fields with the intention of maintaining one or more fields at a Level 2 Recreational Status (“game fields”) and not providing the same level of maintenance to the other fields with the intention of using them as “practice fields.” The idea of the program is for participants that adopt fields to either maintain or raise the level of a field to a Level 2 Recreational Status. Participants should only be allowed to adopt fields that they intend to maintain at the Level 2 standard.

Adopt-A-Sports Field Program Executed Letters of Agreement

Recommendation

We recommend that the AFMD establish a policy that does not allow for fields that are not available for use to be permitted or adopted. If fields are added to an already existing park, the AFMD can still give right of first refusal for the new fields to an incumbent organization already adopting fields at the existing park.

In addition, both the AFMD and the Adoptee should perform an additional review of Adopt-A-Sports Field agreements to ensure that the identifying information is correct in the executed agreements.

Basis for Recommendation

During our observation of adopted athletic fields, we noted one instance in which an Adopt-A-Sports Field Program agreement had been executed for an adoptee to adopt soccer fields at Keith Weiss Park that do not yet exist. In the past, this adoptee had used one field in the park but upon inspection, this field was overgrown with weeds and has clearly not been used in some time. During the past year, a contractor has been doing some work in the park area and when complete, three additional soccer fields will be available for use. Per discussion with Parks and Recreation Department management, it appears that the adoptee was using the Adopt-A-Sports Field Program to gain incumbent status for these fields and obtain a right of first refusal once these newly created fields are available for use.

During our observation of adopted athletic fields, we also noted one instance in which the address included in the executed Adopt-A-Sports Field Program agreement listed the incorrect address for the sports fields being adopted. The address included in the executed agreement was for a different adopted sports field.

Physical Observation of Selected Level 1 and Level 2 Adopted Fields

As part of the performance audit, physical observations of athletic fields were conducted to determine if the condition of the fields reflects that proper maintenance procedures have been performed.

Procedures Performed

- We obtained a listing of the 23 fields identified by the AFMD as Level 1 fields as of January 1, 2008 and the 41 fields adopted during the Spring 2008 (January 1 through June 30th).
- From the above list, we selected 6 of the 23 Level 1 fields (26%) and 10 of the Adopted Fields (24%) representing the different types of fields (softball, baseball, soccer, football, rugby, lacrosse) and different geographic locations (both by park name and councilmember district) for physical observation.
- We obtained the appropriate “Softball & Baseball Field” or “Soccer, Football, & Lacrosse Field” Maintenance and Safety Checklist used by the AFMD for each type of field.

Note: While the Maintenance and Safety Checklists contain a group of questions related to lighting, it was determined that it was not cost/beneficial to inspect for burned out lights. A more efficient and accurate method of gaining feedback on lighting was determined to be through the permitted user surveys.

- We coordinated and supervised staff resources from the City Controller’s Office Audit Division to perform physical observation of the fields during May 2008 to determine the condition of each field as follows:

The Maintenance and Safety Checklists contain detailed questions in several grouped categories. See questions to follow. As each individual field (or group of fields) was observed, each grouped category was assessed an overall acceptable, caution or deficient rating. Definitions of each rating are as follows:

Acceptable – Observed condition of field(s) related to this category was acceptable. In the tables to follow, “accept” is used to denote Acceptable.

Caution – Determination of observed condition of field(s) related to this category was less than desired and will become deficient over time if not addressed.

Deficient – Observed condition of field(s) related to this category was deficient.

For any rating assessed as either caution or deficient, provided comments as to why that rating was assessed.

Maintenance and Safety Checklist Questions Used During Observations

The questions included in the maintenance and safety checklists for each grouped category that were observed are as follows. Unless specifically noted, the questions apply to both the Softball & Baseball Type Fields and the Soccer, Football & Lacrosse Type Fields:

Skinned Areas – Softball & Baseball Fields only

1. The soil is too loose to provide good running traction.
2. The soil surface is not loose enough around sliding zones for safe sliding.
3. The soil is too abrasive for safe sliding.
4. Running paths and sliding zones near bases have become worn and need to be reconditioned.
5. Batter's box and home plate area have become worn and need to be reconditioned.
6. Pitcher's mound has become worn and needs to be reconditioned.
7. The skinned area has low spots, holes, or is not level and should be dragged/re-graded.
8. There is a hazardous soil build up (lip) between the skinned area and the turf.
9. The skinned area has unsafe wet spots and/or puddles.

Bases and Anchoring – Softball & Baseball Fields only

1. The base coverings have unsafe rips or gouges.
2. The base framework or hardware is loose or damaged.
3. The base ground stake is unsafely protruding above the surface grade.
4. The base ground stake is not firmly secured in its concrete footing.
5. The bases do not seat properly with the ground elevation or they are seated loosely.
6. The surface of home plate is not level with the surrounding surface.
7. The surface of home plate is worn or irregular.
8. The pitcher's rubber is not level with the surrounding surface or is not secured safely into the ground.
9. The pitcher's rubber is showing unsafe wear or gouges.

Goals – Soccer, Football & Lacrosse Fields only

1. The goals are not properly secured and anchored.
2. Open hooks used to attach nets have not been removed.
3. There are rusted or weak areas on the posts or crossbar.
4. There are jagged or sharp points on edges of the posts.

Physical Observation of Selected Level 1 and Level 2 Adopted Fields

Playing Surface – Both types of fields

1. Litter and unsafe debris is scattered around the field and player/spectator areas.
2. Sprinkler heads, drainage grates, valves boxes, etc. are above grade, have sharp edges, or unsafe protrusions.

Fencing – Both types of fields

1. Fence posts are loose or improperly set in the ground.
2. Concrete footings are exposed above ground.
3. Fencing is not securely attached to the fence posts with loose or broken ties.
4. There are unsafe gaps under fencing.
5. There is no bottom tension wire or railing to secure the bottom of fence.
6. There is no top railing to secure fence at the top.
7. Wire ends of chain link fencing are exposed along the top.
8. There are damaged portions of fencing that are loose, sharp, protruding, or unsafe.
9. There are unsafe gaps in the backstop or netting with worn out boards or fencing.

Turf Areas – Both types of fields

1. There are unsafe bare spots in turf with a hard soil surface exposed.
2. Soil beneath turf is roughly graded making an unsafe running surface.
3. Turf is not uniform in texture or density or height making an unsafe running surface.
4. Excessive thatch is causing turf to be lumpy and unsafe to run on.
5. There are hazardous tire ruts in turf.

Bleachers – Both types of fields

1. The nuts and bolts on the bleachers are loose or missing or protruding.
2. The guardrails are loose or missing.
3. The plank or railing end caps are loose or missing.
4. Wooden planks are worn out or splintered.
5. There are hazardous protrusions or sharp edges.

General Safety Considerations – Both types of fields

1. Skinned foul lines have become rutted and need to be reconditioned.
2. Areas that are hazardous or under repair have not been blocked off or identified.
3. There is not an adequate buffer zone between the playing field and fixed objects such as bleachers, benches, trashcans and utility poles.

Physical Observation of Selected Level 1 and Level 2 Adopted Fields

Results of Physical Observations Performed

The selected fields (or groups of fields) were observed by members of the City Controller's Audit Division between May 21st and May 28th. Results are as follows:

Softball & Baseball Level 1 Competitive/Tournament Fields

#	Field	Skinned Areas	Playing Surface	Bases and Anchoring	Fencing	Turf Areas	Bleachers	General Safety
1	MacGregor Nagle	Accept	Accept	Accept	Accept	Accept	Accept	Accept
2	Anderson Clements	Accept	Deficient (1)	Accept	Accept	Accept	Accept	Accept
3	Herman Brown #3	Accept	Accept	Accept	Accept	Accept	Deficient (2)	Accept
4	Memorial #4	Accept	Accept	Accept	Accept	Accept	Accept	Accept

Note 1: Excessive trash in player and/or spectator areas.

Note 2: Bleachers did not have guardrails (safety issue).

Softball & Baseball Adopted Fields

#	Field	Skinned Areas	Playing Surface	Bases and Anchoring	Fencing	Turf Areas	Bleachers	General Safety
1	Smokey Jasper # 1	Accept	Accept	Accept	Accept	Accept	Accept	Accept
2	Smokey Jasper # 2	Caution (1)	Accept	Deficient (2)	Deficient (3)	Caution (4)	Accept	Accept
3	Smokey Jasper # 3	Caution (1)	Accept	Accept	Accept	Caution (4)	Accept	Accept
4	Smokey Jasper # 4	Deficient (9)	Accept	Accept	Accept	Caution (4)	Accept	Accept
5	Townwood # 1	Accept	Accept	Deficient (5)	Accept	Deficient (6)	Deficient (7)	Accept
6	Beverly Hills # 7	Accept	Caution (8)	Accept	Accept	Accept	Deficient (7)	Accept
7	Linkwood # 1	Deficient (9)	Accept	Deficient (5,10)	Accept	Accept	Accept	Accept
8	Proctor Plaza # 1	Deficient (1,9)	Accept	Caution (11)	Deficient (12)	Deficient (6)	Accept	Accept
9	Hidalgo # 1	Accept	Accept	Accept	Accept	Accept	Accept	Accept
10	Hidalgo # 2	Caution (1)	Accept	Accept	Caution (13)	Accept	Accept	Accept
11	Hidalgo # 3	Deficient (9)	Accept	Deficient (5,14)	Accept	Deficient (6)	n/a	Accept

Note 1: Grass has been allowed to grow into skinned areas.

Note 2: 2nd base is anchored inside the base path on turf and loosely anchored preventing safe sliding.

Note 3: Hinge attaching vehicle entrance gate to post in outfield is broken and jagged.

Note 4: Excessive weeds on field causing the turf to be lumpy.

Note 5: Pitching rubber worn and not level with surrounding surface.

Note 6: Turf has hard soil bare spots, is roughly graded, and is not uniform in texture.

Note 7: Bleachers did not have guardrails (safety issue).

Note 8: Excessive trash in dugouts.

Note 9: Batter's box, pitcher's mound and sliding zones have become worn and should be reconditioned.

Note 10: Bases have unsafe rips and should be replaced.

Note 11: No pitching rubber in place.

Note 12: Backstop has holes and exposed wire ends at bottom pointing toward playing field and unsafe gaps under fencing along first base line.

Note 13: Portions of bottom tubing of fence are protruding due to becoming loose from couplings.

Note 14: Home plate is worn and should be replaced.

Physical Observation of Selected Level 1 and Level 2 Adopted Fields

Soccer, Football, Lacrosse Level 1 Competitive/Tournament Fields

#	Field	Goals	Playing Surface	Fencing	Turf Areas	Bleachers	General Safety
1	Mason #5	Accept	Caution (1)	Accept	Accept	Accept	Accept
2	Cullen #1	Deficient (2)	Accept	Accept	Accept	Deficient (3)	Accept

Note 1: Excessive trash in player and/or spectator areas.

Note 2: Goals are secured and anchored. However, hooks to attach nets were not present and nets were tied around the goal posts. Also, rust areas were noted on posts.

Note 3: Bleachers did not have guardrails (safety issue).

Soccer, Football, Lacrosse Adopted Fields

#	Field	Goals	Playing Surface	Fencing	Turf Areas	Bleachers	General Safety
1	Keith Weiss # 1-3	See note 1					
2	Cambridge Park # 2	Caution (2)	Accept	n/a	Accept	n/a	Accept
3	Sylvan Rodriguez #1-2	Caution (2)	Accept	n/a	Accept	n/a	Accept
4	Alief Park # 12	n/a	Deficient (5)	Accept	Deficient (3)	Deficient (4)	Accept

Note 1: These fields do not yet exist and could not be observed. In the past, this adoptee had used one field in the park but upon inspection, this field was overgrown with weeds and has clearly not been used in some time. During the past year, a contractor has been performing work in the park area and when complete, three additional soccer fields will be available for use. It appears the adoptee is using the Adopt-A-Sports field program to gain incumbent status for these newly created fields by adopting them before they exist.

Note 2: Rust areas on posts and crossbars.

Note 3: Unsafe bare spots with hard dirt on field and sidelines. Also, turf texture is not uniform.

Note 4: Bleachers did not have guardrails and planks were loosely attached (safety issues).

Note 5: Excessive trash on field and in player/spectator areas.

Noted Trends and Recommendations

Level 1 Field Trends

Based on the above observed conditions, the Level 1 fields maintained by the AFMD generally appear to be maintained in accordance with the targeted standards. However, condition ratings of either “Caution” or “Deficient” were given to individual categories at 4 of the 6 fields observed. See respective notes for each type of field observed in the preceding pages.

Recommendation

We recommend that the AFMD review each of the conditions noted for the Level 1 fields that were not rated “Acceptable” and perform the appropriate maintenance action to address the conditions noted.

Adopted Field Trends

Based on the above observed conditions, only 2 of the 15 fields maintained by Adopt-A-Sports Field program participants had “Acceptable” condition ratings for each category observed. See respective notes within the Results and Recommendations section for details regarding each type of field observed.

Recommendation

We recommend that the AFMD review each of the conditions noted for the Adopted Fields and meet with each respective adoptee to discuss what actions are necessary to address the conditions noted.

User Surveys

We conducted a survey utilizing a web-based survey tool to obtain input from permitted users of PARD athletic fields regarding the fields they used from May 1, 2007 to May 2008. The survey requested their feedback and recommendations on the quality and condition of the athletic fields used during this time period. To conduct the survey we performed the following procedures:

- Worked with the PARD Management and Finance Department to provide an individual to manually review their permitted user files and create an Excel database containing the permitted user name, league organization, field name and number rented, email address if available and contact phone information.
- We noted that the list included 129 permitted users during the time frame. Of these 129, we noted 5 duplicates (users who had permitted more than once) for a potential total of 124 surveys to be distributed. Of these 124 potential surveys, we obtained email addresses from the permitted user files for 106 users. The remaining 18 permitted user's information was forwarded to the City Controller's Office Audit Division who provided resources to contact these permitted users to attempt to obtain an email address or conduct the survey over the phone. If the City Controller's Office Audit Division was able to contact the permitted user, they either obtained their email address or conducted the survey over the phone. Seven additional email addresses were obtained and 3 permitted user surveys were conducted over the phone.
- Based on the above, the survey was distributed to 113 permitted users via email with links to respond using the online survey tool.
- In addition, based on the type of field permitted, the survey population was segregated into the following four categories:
 - 1) Group A – Softball & Baseball Level 1 Competitive/Tournament Fields
 - 2) Group B – Softball & Baseball Non-Level 1 Fields
 - 3) Group C – Soccer, Football, Lacrosse Level 1 Competitive/Tournament Fields
 - 4) Group D – Soccer, Football, Lacrosse Non-Level 1 Fields
- On May 21st, distributed the surveys via email to the four permitted user groups. Potential survey respondents were requested to respond no later than Sunday June 1st. Response results as of the close of the survey are as follows:

	Number emailed	Phone surveys	Number Distributed	Total Number Responded	Percent Returned
Group A - Softball & Baseball Level 1	9	-	9	4	44.4%
Group B - Softball & Baseball Non-Level 1	51	-	51	12	23.5%
Group C - Soccer, Football, Lacrosse, and other Level 1	7	-	7	3	42.9%
Group D - Soccer, Football, Lacrosse, and other Non-Level	46	3	49	18	36.7%
Overall	113	3	116	37	31.9%

The following pages present the detail results of the survey by category.

User Surveys

Group A - Softball & Baseball Level 1 Competitive/Tournament Fields Survey Responses

Question 1		How often have you (or your league) used the athletic fields since May 1, 2007?				
Responses	2 times or less	3 - 5 times	6 - 10 times	> 10 times	Total Responses	
Response Count	-	-	-	4	4	
Response %	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%	

Question 2		Litter or unsafe debris is not scattered around the field and player/spectator areas.				
Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Responses
Response Count	2	-	-	2	-	4
Response %	50%	0%	0%	50%	0%	100%

Question 3		Line marking is appropriate for the athletic field(s) you have utilized.				
Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Responses
Response Count	2	1	-	-	1	4
Response %	50%	25%	0%	0%	25%	100%

Question 4		The athletic field(s) you have utilized have been appropriately mowed and edged.				
Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Responses
Response Count	1	1	1	-	1	4
Response %	25%	25%	25%	0%	25%	100%

Question 5		Dirt areas are maintained in appropriate condition.				
Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Responses
Response Count	1	1	-	1	1	4
Response %	25%	25%	0%	25%	25%	100%

User Surveys

Group A - Softball & Baseball Level 1 Competitive/Tournament Fields Survey Reponses

Question 6	Please provide any comments regarding the condition of the dirt areas below.	Total Responses
Response 1:	Pebbles and rocks on the infield.	1

Question 7	Batter's box and home plate areas are in appropriate condition.					Total Responses
Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
Response Count	1	2	-	-	1	4
Response %	25%	50%	0%	0%	25%	100%

Question 8	Please provide any comments regarding the condition of the batter's box and home plate area below.	Total Responses
No responses provided.		0

Question 9	Pitcher's mound, pitching rubber, bases, and anchoring of bases are in appropriate condition.					Total Responses
Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
Response Count	1	2	-	-	1	4
Response %	25%	50%	0%	0%	25%	100%

Question 10	Please provide any comments regarding the condition of the pitcher's mound, pitching rubber, bases, and anchoring of bases below.	Total Responses
No responses provided.		0

Question 11	Grass areas are maintained in the appropriate condition.					Total Responses
Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
Response Count	1	1	1	-	1	4
Response %	25%	25%	25%	0%	25%	100%

User Surveys

Group A - Softball & Baseball Level 1 Competitive/Tournament Fields Survey Responses

Question 12		Fencing around the playing surface is adequate and safe.					Total Responses
Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Total Responses
Response Count	1	2	-	-	1	-	4
Response %	25%	50%	0%	0%	25%	0%	100%

Question 13		If applicable, lighting of the field is maintained in appropriate condition. (i.e. properly illuminates the field, does not have burned out lights)					Total Responses
Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Total Responses
Response Count	-	-	-	3	-	1	4
Response %	0%	0%	0%	75%	0%	25%	100%

Question 14		If applicable, bleachers are maintained and safe.					Total Responses
Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Total Responses
Response Count	-	3	-	1	-	-	4
Response %	0%	75%	0%	25%	0%	0%	100%

Question 15		Total Responses
Please provide any general comments regarding the condition of the athletic fields below.		
Response 1:	I would like to see better communication between the maintenance department and the field monitors and then back to the end users like our group, well enough in advance, when possible, if a field is rained out or unplayable. Too many times we have had umpires, players, and spectators come out to fields that were rained out several hours in advance, and we were not notified. This costs our league \$120 in umpire fees each time this happens, and also causes 30 or more people a wasted trip and gas expense. I would also like to see more level 1 fields come available to adult users. Many level 1 baseball fields lay dormant most of the year. There are more adult baseball users for level 1 fields than there are HS aged youth to use them. I do like the improvements in the quality of the fields, and we are favorable of the price increases to pay and maintain them. Thanks.	1

User Surveys

Group B - Softball & Baseball Non-Level 1 Fields Survey Responses

Question 1		How often have you (or your league) used the athletic fields since May 1, 2007?				Total Responses
Responses	2 times or less	3 - 5 times	6 - 10 times	> 10 times		
Response Count	-	-	-	12		12
Response %	0%	0%	0%	100%		100%

Question 2		Litter or unsafe debris is not scattered around the field and player/spectator areas.					Total Responses
Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
Response Count	2	6	-	2	2		12
Response %	17%	50%	0%	17%	17%		100%

Question 3		Line marking is appropriate for the athletic field(s) you have utilized.					Total Responses
Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
Response Count	5	3	1	1	2		12
Response %	42%	25%	8%	8%	17%		100%

Question 4		The athletic field(s) you have utilized have been appropriately mowed and edged.					Total Responses
Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
Response Count	2	4	1	3	2		12
Response %	17%	33%	8%	25%	17%		100%

Question 5		Dirt areas are maintained in appropriate condition.					Total Responses
Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
Response Count	1	4	3	2	2		12
Response %	8%	33%	25%	17%	17%		100%

User Surveys

Group B - Softball & Baseball Non-Level 1 Fields Survey Responses

Question 6	Please provide any comments regarding the condition of the dirt areas below.	Total Responses
Response 1:	We need help maintaining and getting dirt for our fields.	
Response 2:	We don't get any dirt from the city. We have to buy our own so we keep it aside from the field.	
Response 3:	Grass is all over instead of dirt at Wilson Park.	
Response 4:	Levy field: dirt areas not dragged except when Lamar softball takes care of the field. Linkwood is more or less OK	
Response 5:	Fields need to be renovated.	
Response 6:	Too much sand mix. Sometimes small trash and/or pieces of glass mixed in.	
Response 7:	Dirt was put on the infield near the end of our little league baseball season. We should also have access to a pile of dirt to fill in pot holes from cleats and wet areas (during rain outs) at the pitching mound and home plate. All fields at Law II should be skinned with dirt placed on them.	
Response 8:	The playing field is unlevel and there are no base cut outs.	8

Question 7	Batter's box and home plate areas are in appropriate condition.					Total Responses
Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Responses
Response Count	1	5	-	2	4	12
Response %	8%	42%	0%	17%	33%	100%

Question 8	Please provide any comments regarding the condition of the batter's box and home plate area below.	Total Responses
Response 1:	Need proper dirt to help maintain.	
Response 2:	Both areas are horrible at Wilson Park.	
Response 3:	Levy field: poor conditions. Linkwood: poor conditions.	
Response 4:	Too much dirt instead of proper clay mix. Need more quick dry mix.	
Response 5:	We did not have enough dirt to fill in the batters box most of the season. It was a hard ground surface from the previous year.	
Response 6:	Home plate is unlevel, needs to be regraded.	6

Question 9	Pitcher's mound, pitching rubber, bases, and anchoring of bases are in appropriate condition.					Total Responses
Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Responses
Response Count	1	3	4	-	4	12
Response %	8%	25%	33%	0%	33%	100%

User Surveys

Group B - Softball & Baseball Non-Level 1 Fields Survey Responses

Question 10	Please provide any comments regarding the condition of the pitcher's mound, pitching rubber, bases, and anchoring of bases below.	Total Responses
Response 1:	Need proper dirt to help maintain.	
Response 2:	Levy is a softball field. Linkwood is rather poorly maintained	
Response 3:	Mound is sometimes too hard, too high sometimes. Wrong mixture used to build mound.	
Response 4:	Pitcher doesn't have a mound, there is an old rubber in the ground not elevated for the pitcher. there are not holes to fill in the break away bases required by Little League International. No bases are provided by the park. Need new rubbers and dirt to fill in old holes dug by pitchers.	
Response 5:	There is no pitchers mound.	5

Question 11	Grass areas are maintained in the appropriate condition.					Total Responses
Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Responses
Response Count	1	4	5	2	-	12
Response %	8%	33%	42%	17%	0%	100%

Question 12	Fencing around the playing surface is adequate and safe.						Total Responses
Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Total Responses
Response Count	2	3	2	1	4	-	12
Response %	17%	25%	17%	8%	33%	0%	100%

Question 13	If applicable, lighting of the field is maintained in appropriate condition. (i.e. properly illuminates the field, does not have burned out lights)						Total Responses
Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Total Responses
Response Count	1	5	2	1	2	1	12
Response %	8%	42%	17%	8%	17%	8%	100%

User Surveys

Group B - Softball & Baseball Non-Level 1 Fields Survey Responses

Question 14	If applicable, bleachers are maintained and safe.						Total Responses
Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Total Responses
Response Count	1	5	4	1	1	-	12
Response %	8%	42%	33%	8%	8%	0%	100%

Question 15	Please provide any general comments regarding the condition of the athletic fields below.	Total Responses
Response 1:	We try to maintain our fields as safe as possible but our problem is getting proper top soil to keep them safe and playable.	
Response 2:	This year's fortune has been absence of rain, when it rains and the mowing schedule is missed grass can grow very high. It would be ideal if baseball parks were NOT allowed to be used as PET fields.	
Response 3:	Smokey Jasper Park needs renovation.	
Response 4:	Lack of available water hook up to maintain up-keep at some fields, lack of field lights, lack of field fencing and foul poles at our fields, poorly maintained port-a-cans, too many beer cans and bottles on the fields during the weekends, lack of large Warnings signs with emergency call numbers on or near the fields. The adopt a field needs to be improved to give more aid to the Little League. Storage area for equipment to maintain the fields by little league with adopt-a-field permits. More drinking fountains near the field areas. Every field needs an emergency call box- 911 or park ranger call box.	
Response 5:	Law II on Scarlett Street. Needs new fencing at the backstop so practice won't be delayed by pass balls. Timer should be properly functioning when a league adopts the field and not halfway thru the season. Bleachers should be located at the baseball fields during baseball season and not at the football fields. They were moved to the baseball fields late so parents had to stand and watch kids practice. We need a properly working water fountain for the kids. We need a bathroom for the little t-ballers and not just temporary portable bathroom cans that are so far away from the fields. We need working electrical outlets at every field for pitching machine and score keeping. We also need fencing so that our t-ballers and minors don't have to travel because they don't have enclosed field. there should also be a sign at Scarlett and Mykawa informing that the field is here. Sterling High School has a roll out box for equipment Southeast Little League should also have one for the kids. Water hose spouts will be nice to keep the fields maintained for proper fielding. East End has a great baseball park for their community, so we should have a nice park for our kids to play at in South Park. Thank you for your time and effort.	
Response 6:	Overall conditions of the fields are poor.	6

User Surveys

Group C - Soccer, Football, Lacrosse Level 1 Competitive/Tournament Fields Survey Responses

Question 1		How often have you (or your league) used the athletic fields since May 1, 2007?				Total Responses
Responses	2 times or less	3 - 5 times	6 - 10 times	> 10 times		
Response Count	-	-	-	3		3
Response %	0%	0%	0%	100%		100%

Question 2		Litter or unsafe debris is not scattered around the field and player/spectator areas.				Total Responses
Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
Response Count	-	-	2	1	-	3
Response %	0%	0%	67%	33%	0%	100%

Question 3		Line marking is appropriate for the athletic field(s) you have utilized.				Total Responses
Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
Response Count	-	3	-	-	-	3
Response %	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%

Question 4		The athletic field(s) you have utilized have been appropriately mowed and edged.				Total Responses
Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
Response Count	-	3	-	-	-	3
Response %	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%

Question 5		Grass areas are maintained in appropriate condition.				Total Responses
Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
Response Count	1	-	1	-	1	3
Response %	33%	0%	33%	0%	33%	100%

User Surveys

Group C - Soccer, Football, Lacrosse Level 1 Competitive/Tournament Fields Survey Responses

Question 6	Goals are properly secured and maintained in appropriate condition.					Total Responses
Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
Response Count	-	3	-	-	-	3
Response %	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%

Question 7	Please provide any comments regarding the condition of the goals below.	Total Responses
Response 1:	Condition ok, damage frequent by mowing tractors.	1

Question 8	Fencing around the playing surface is adequate and safe.					Total Responses	
Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	
Response Count	3	-	-	-	-	-	3
Response %	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%

Question 9	If applicable, lighting of the field is maintained in appropriate condition. (i.e. properly illuminates the field, does not have burned out lights)					Total Responses	
Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	
Response Count	-	1	1	1	-	-	3
Response %	0%	33%	33%	33%	0%	0%	100%

Question 10	If applicable, bleachers are maintained and safe.					Total Responses	
Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	
Response Count	-	-	2	1	-	-	3
Response %	0%	0%	67%	33%	0%	0%	100%

User Surveys

Group C - Soccer, Football, Lacrosse Level 1 Competitive/Tournament Fields Survey Responses

Question 11	Please provide any general comments regarding the condition of the athletic fields below.	Total Responses
Response 1:	Only 6-8 gr-1 soccer fields in city parks. No lacrosse. Combination soccer/football/rugby approach a total failure. Conflict of use and continuous damage of fields.	
Response 2:	<p>A: PRIORITY.... fields are NOT watered enough... this is Houston, TX !!</p> <p>B: When was the last time the fields were fertilized?? aerated??, re-seeded ?? over-seeded?? needs to be at least 4-5 times a year. repeating: This Houston, TX.</p> <p>C: Choice & application of type of sprinklers used, is poor!! Sprinklers are creating low spots, craters of 6 - 8 depth with a diameter of 2-4 feet !!!! A very, very UNSAFE condition!</p> <p>D: The rule of NO alcoholic beverages, is NOT being enforced!! It's amazing how many BEER cans & BOTTLES one can find in the restrooms, trash-cans.. There should NOT be any exception to this rule</p> <p>E: Car-break-ins in the parking-lot, literally ZERO presence of the park-rangers, hope some of these issues will be addressed !! Appreciate it.</p>	2

User Surveys

Group D - Soccer, Football, Lacrosse Non-Level 1 Fields Survey Responses

Question 1	How often have you (or your league) used the athletic fields since May 1, 2007?				
Responses	2 times or less	3 - 5 times	6 - 10 times	> 10 times	Total Responses
Response Count	2	1	-	15	18
Response %	11%	6%	0%	83%	100%

Question 2	Litter or unsafe debris is not scattered around the field and player/spectator areas.					
Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Responses
Response Count	4	10	2	1	1	18
Response %	22%	56%	11%	6%	6%	100%

Question 3	Line marking is appropriate for the athletic field(s) you have utilized.					
Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Responses
Response Count	1	7	2	3	5	18
Response %	6%	39%	11%	17%	28%	100%

Question 4	The athletic field(s) you have utilized have been appropriately mowed and edged.					
Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Responses
Response Count	5	5	3	4	-	17
Response %	29%	29%	18%	24%	0%	100%

Question 5	Grass areas are maintained in appropriate condition.					
Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Responses
Response Count	3	5	3	6	1	18
Response %	17%	28%	17%	33%	6%	100%

User Surveys

Group D - Soccer, Football, Lacrosse Non-Level 1 Fields Survey Responses

Question 6	Goals are properly secured and maintained in appropriate condition.					Total Responses
Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
Response Count	7	6	3	1	1	18
Response %	39%	33%	17%	6%	6%	100%

Question 7	Please provide any comments regarding the condition of the goals below.					Total Responses
Response 1:	The field is still unleveled and has a water build up at one end of the park.					
Response 2:	None.					
Response 3:	Hermann park #8 or 9 needs priming and painting.					
Response 4:	NA-We're a Youth football organization.					
Response 5:	They are in good condition.					
Response 6:	We need field goal post at Wilson Memorial - requested since 2002.					6

Question 8	Fencing around the playing surface is adequate and safe.						Total Responses
Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	
Response Count	3	6	2	2	-	5	18
Response %	17%	33%	11%	11%	0%	28%	100%

Question 9	If applicable, lighting of the field is maintained in appropriate condition. (i.e. properly illuminates the field, does not have burned out lights)						Total Responses
Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	
Response Count	1	1	4	4	3	5	18
Response %	6%	6%	22%	22%	17%	28%	100%

Question 10	If applicable, bleachers are maintained and safe.						Total Responses
Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	
Response Count	2	7	3	2	-	4	18
Response %	11%	39%	17%	11%	0%	22%	100%

User Surveys

Group D - Soccer, Football, Lacrosse Non-Level 1 Fields Survey Responses

Question 11	Please provide any general comments regarding the condition of the athletic fields below.	Total Responses
Response 1:	We (Houston Youth Rugby Association) have been working on our 501 C for sometime and also a 5 year plan to develop youth 7's leagues. It has been slow. Our plan is to resod the Memorial Park Rugby Field and put a fence around it for restricted use, but we are not there yet	
Response 2:	Lighting is an issue. Our park has been permitted since 2002. We are in great need of lighting. There have been a dead body found in the park. We have over 200 hundred youth that are in our program and we need to have a safe environment. We are a pocket park. The nearest parks don't serve our area. This is a big issue. Help!! (See note below)	
Response 3:	It is necessary to care more about the condition of the soccer fields.	
Response 4:	Infields are not leveled which City said would be done in 2007 and have not been done and very little grass has grown back.	
Response 5:	Concerning Monte Beach Park: Installation of bleachers, lights and fencing would be nice. Concerning Dodson Lake Park: Needs security and burned out light bulbs should be replaced.	
Response 6:	Bare spots and large ruts/cracks on the soccer field.	
Response 7:	The fields could be treated for ants a little better.	
Response 8:	Winzer park has been requested several times to fill a hole inside the playing field, but has not been taken care of.	
Response 9:	Our field use to have lights but now they don't it is very hard for us to practice after day light savings time.	
Response 10:	We have been practicing at this location for over 15yrs. A few yrs ago the lights were removed. Which is the heart of how we provide this service. We have attempt on all levels to get lights replaced but no one is listening. Because of this our Organization has suffered. We would like to discuss how lights can be removed from a field without informing a Youth league which has over 100 kids ranging from age 4-12. I would really like for someone to call me to discuss.	
Response 11:	Thank You. (See note below)	
Response 11:	Need more sand on soccer fields	
Response 12:	Grass at Willow Park is not always mowed according to the 10-day schedule during the summer months.	
Response 13:	The fields need dirt ...prove to be a dangerous after big rains and adults play on them with no regards to the wet condition. Need field goal post added to soccer goals please.	
Response 14:	Would like to have bleachers around the field and would like regulation-size soccer fields.	
Response 15:	We used a baseball field that was over grown and full of ruts.	15

Note: Survey respondent provided contact information requesting further follow-up by the PARD. This information, not included above, was furnished to Parks management.

Recommendation

We recommend that the AFMD review the survey responses in detail and pay particular attention to the general comments provided by the respondents. In instances in which the comments refer to specific athletic fields, we recommend that the AFMD inspect the field(s) to confirm items noted in the comments and perform the appropriate action to address the conditions noted.

Exhibit I: Views of Responsible Officials

EXHIBIT I



CITY OF HOUSTON
Parks and Recreation Department

Interoffice
Correspondence

To: Annise Parker, City Controller

From: Joe Turner, Director

Date: December 31, 2008

CC:

Subject: Department response to the performance audit of the Management and Maintenance of the HPARD existing athletic fields

The Houston Parks and Recreation department has reviewed the audit findings and recommendations from Jeffersonwells in great detail and have attached (1) a response to each recommendation; and (2) the Draft of the Sports Field Management: Standard Operating Procedures Manual (SOP). The SOP is still in draft form and being reviewed by the department's management team.

If there are any questions and/or concerns, please contact Cheryl D. Johnson at 713-865-4542.

Joe Turner, Director
Houston Parks and Recreation Department

Cc: Cheryl D. Johnson
Steve Schoonover
Abel Gonzales
Anthony Wise

attachments

*Views of Responsible
Officials*

EXHIBIT I

HPARD – Athletics Field Management Division Audit Recommendations ~ Responses

1. Objective

Determine whether the management and maintenance of the existing athletic fields meet the PARD's mission statement, goals, and/or standards

Recommendation

We recommend that the AFMD draft and formally adopt a mission statement specific to the management and maintenance of athletic fields.

Response: Sportsfield Management (SFM) has drafted a mission statement specific to the management and maintenance of athletic fields. The mission statement appears at the beginning of the Sports Field Management Standard Operating Procedures Manual (SOPM), which is still in draft form. A copy of the manual will be submitted with this report.

2. Objective

Determine whether the PARD has a system to identify the effectiveness of the management and maintenance of the current athletic fields.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that an inspection form be created so that Field Supervisors can document inspections performed on Level 1 and targeted Level 2 fields on a weekly basis in accordance with the targeted maintenance standards. While establishing targeted maintenance standards for mowing/trimming, litter removed, skinned area maintenance, field marking, and turf area fertilization are important for planning purposes, the weekly field inspections can serve as a mitigating control to identify necessary field maintenance items on a real-time basis.*

Response: An inspection form to monitor weekly maintenance activity and field conditions has been created (SOPM section 10.3).

- *We recommend the AFMD consider adjusting the targeted maintenance standards to reflect intended performance of each maintenance activity. In addition, the AFMD should communicate to PARD maintenance employees the importance of both performing and recording each maintenance activity on the work orders.*

Response: We will maintain our targeted maintenance standards and reinforce to staff the importance of capturing data related to field maintenance. The standards are documented in section 2 of the SOPM.

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- *We recommend that the AFMD consider adjusting their targeted maintenance standard for litter removal to an “as needed basis” to reflect intended performance of this activity. Litter removal is an important maintenance activity but is generally performed on an as-needed basis at each individual field. Maintenance employees may not record time spent on this activity on the work order forms if the time spent is nominal or there is no need to perform this activity. Also, as noted earlier, if inspections are being performed on a weekly basis, these inspections can serve as a mitigating control to identify instances in which additional litter removal activity needs to be performed.*

Response: We will maintain the standard of daily litter removal so that our staff will recognize the value we place on this activity. We will consider a new maintenance task code that would document when litter removal was not necessary.

- *We recommend that the AFMD consider adjusting their targeted maintenance standard for mowing/trimming to reflect intended performance of this activity. During dormant months, mowing/trimming may need to be performed on an as-needed basis for both Level 1 and Level 2 fields. During the March through October period, seasonal weather variations and rainfall may affect the need to mow on a weekly basis.*

Response: We will maintain the standard mowing / trimming maintenance standard of weekly during the winter period (November – February). Some athletic fields will be over seeded with winter rye that will require weekly mowing. We will consider a new maintenance task code that would document when mowing was not necessary.

- *Due to concerns regarding fields being permitted for certain usages for which they were not designed or over usage of fields, we recommend that the AFMD be included in the approval process before athletic fields are permitted to users. This can be accomplished in the following ways:*
 - *The AFMD should provide the Reservation Office (the group responsible for issuing permits of athletic fields) a list of all known available athletic fields by type (baseball/softball, soccer, football, lacrosse etc.) and the appropriate level (Level 1, 2 or 3) at which they can be permitted.*
 - *If there is a concern about over usage of a field for sound maintenance practices, the AFMD should communicate with the Reservations Office to temporarily remove the field from the list of available fields to permit.*
 - *If the Reservations Office receives a request for a field that it considered temporarily unavailable or it is not on the list of known available athletic fields available for permit, they should obtain authorization from the AFMD that the field being requested is suitable for the requested permitted activity.*

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Response: Athletic field use and permitting is addressed in the SOPM section 5.1 and appendix section 10.5. The SOPM address the over use of athletic fields in section 2 Field Classification / Standards. A turf and playing surface rebuilding program is outlined.

- *We recommend that the AFMD work with the members of the Greenspace Management Division Information Technology group to produce management-friendly MAPPER reports downloaded into Excel on a weekly or monthly basis. These reports would be produced by maintenance district and could contain characteristics that would allow a user to quickly identify the number of days it has been since a specific maintenance task was last performed at an individual field and identify whether this is within a pre-defined acceptable range or in danger of being out of compliance with established maintenance standards. Based on specific conditions at a field, management could choose whether or not to perform the maintenance activity and/or whether the established standard is appropriate for that particular field.*

Response: We are in the process of defining the scope of a proposed management report for monitoring athletic field maintenance and costs. The next step would be to work with IT to develop a working report. The report format should be completed by January 2009.

- *The AFMD hired an intern during the summer of 2008 to assist in drafting a formal set of policies and procedures for the AFMD. We recommend that the PARD provide whatever resources are necessary to facilitate this effort, perform appropriate review, and officially adopt these policies and procedures as soon as possible.*

Response: A Standard Operating Procedures Manual has been completed. The approval by HPARD is pending.

3. Objective

Determine the accounting of the user fees collected, were they spent to enhance or improve the conditions of the fields for which they were collected, were they used for general maintenance and upkeep of other park facilities (e.g. pools, playgrounds), and/or were they returned to the General Fund.

Recommendation

We recommend that the PARD consider drafting and formally adopting a policy to restrict the user fees collected from existing athletic fields to be used specifically for the maintenance, repair, and improvement of athletic fields.

Response: The department is depositing all revenues collected into Fund 2100 (Parks Special Revenue Fund). During Budget preparation Greenspace Division

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will submit a budget of expenses to offset the Revenues which have been collected. These Revenues will be used to assist with the maintenance of these athletic fields.

4. Objective

Determine whether there is any change in management and maintenance of fields for leagues paying with "sweat equity" and/or paying reduced user fees, versus those leagues paying full user fees.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the PARD AFMD amend the current Letter of Agreement used when a youth organization elects to participate in the Adopt-A-Field ("Sweat Equity") program to include all maintenance tasks intended to be performed for a field to meet the Level 2 standard.*

Response: We will consider revising the current Letter of Agreement. At this time, we will monitor the field maintenance activities that adoption groups are required to perform.

- *We recommend that the PARD AFMD implement their intended changes to the inspection process for adopted fields to include the following:*
 - *Require communication at the front end of the process (instead of just completing an application and then providing a signed Adopt-A-Sports Field Program Letter of Agreement to the PARD Adoption Program Administrator). Instead, prior to adopting a field, a face-to-face meeting should take place at the field between the volunteer and a representative from the AFMD to discuss specific maintenance requirements of the field(s) being adopted. The agreement could be amended to include the date this meeting took place.*
 - *The AFMD needs to provide the Adoptee the Maintenance & Safety Checklist used for inspections.*
 - *The Agreement needs to include a provision for the adoptees to mail or fax documentation of the weekly inspections they are required to perform as a condition of the Adopt-A-Sports Field program.*
 - *At the beginning of an adoption period, the AFMD should schedule periodic (approximately once every two months) follow-up inspections to determine if the adoptee is maintaining their field(s) in accordance with the agreement. If inspection issues are noted, the following would occur:*
 - 1) *The adoptee will have an opportunity to perform appropriate maintenance action to correct the issue*
 - 2) *The PARD AFMD will perform a follow-up inspection*

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- 3) *If a maintenance issue is a consistent problem upon inspection, the PARD will consider either rescinding or not renewing a volunteer's Adopt-A-Sports Field agreement.*

Response: The SOPM address the adoption process in section 6 Field Adoption. An inspection form was created and will be used to monitor adopted fields. A meeting was conducted with representatives of area youth organizations and policies and procedures related to field adoptions was reviewed. A field maintenance clinic will be conducted in January by SFM staff.

- *We recommend that Adopt-A-Sports Field program participants only be allowed to adopt a field that they intend to maintain at a Level 2 standard.*

Response: All adopted fields will be monitored and Letter of Agreement must be strictly adhered to.

- *We recommend that the AFMD establish a policy that does not allow for fields that are not available for use to be permitted or adopted. If fields are added to an already existing park, the AFMD can still give right of first refusal for the new fields to an incumbent organization already adopting fields at the existing park.*

Response: Section 6 of the SOPM addresses this recommendation on field adoptability.

In addition, both the AFMD and the Adoptee should perform an additional review of Adopt-A-Sports Field agreements to ensure that the identifying information is correct in the executed agreements.

Response: Section 6 of the SOPM addresses this recommendation.

5. Objective

Selecting a sample of existing Level 1 and Level 2 Adopted fields and performing physical observations to determine if the conditions of the fields reflect that proper maintenance procedures have been performed

Results and Recommendations

Acceptable – Observed condition of field(s) related to this category was acceptable.

Caution – Determination of observed condition of field(s) related to this category was less than desired and will become deficient over time

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if not addressed.

Deficient – *Observed condition of field(s) related to this category was deficient.*

For any rating assessed as either caution or deficient, provided comments as to why that rating was assessed.

Response: **Inspections and assessments have been reviewed by SFM staff.**

Noted Trends and Recommendations from Physical Observations

Level 1 Field Trends

Based on the above observed conditions, the Level 1 fields maintained by the AFMD generally appear to be maintained in accordance with the targeted standards. However, condition ratings of either “Caution” or “Deficient” were given to individual categories at 4 of the 6 fields observed. See respective notes within the Results and Recommendations section for details regarding each type of field observed.

Recommendation

We recommend that the AFMD review each of the conditions noted for the Level 1 fields that were not rated “Acceptable” and perform the appropriate maintenance action to address the conditions noted.

Response: **Field conditions that were rated deficient has been addressed and corrected. Deficient ratings for bleachers that do not have guard rails can not be addressed. When these bleachers were purchased they met the safety guidelines for that period.**

Adopted Field Trends

Based on the above observed conditions, only 2 of the 15 fields maintained by Adopt-A-Sports Field Program participants had “Acceptable” condition ratings for each category observed. See respective notes within the Results and Recommendations section for details regarding each type of field observed.

Recommendation

We recommend that the AFMD review each of the conditions noted for the Adopted Fields and meet with each respective adoptee to discuss what actions are necessary to address the conditions noted.

Response: **A meeting to review field conditions and maintenance requirement will be held prior to the spring 2009 adoption period.**

**Views of Responsible
Officials**

EXHIBIT I

6. Objective

Utilize an online survey tool to obtain input related to management and maintenance of athletic fields from permitted athletic field users of record.

Recommendation

We recommend that the AFMD review the survey responses in detail and pay particular attention to the general comments provided by the respondents. In instances in which the comments refer to specific athletic fields, we recommend that the AFMD inspect the field(s) to confirm items noted in the comments and perform the appropriate action to address the conditions noted

Response: The survey was reviewed by the SFM section and action taken to address concerns expressed by field users.

Recommendations/Responses End

**Views of Responsible
Officials**