



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS  
COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT**

MEETING DATE: 09/17/2024

ITEM NO: 8

DESK ITEM

---

DATE: September 17, 2024  
TO: Mayor and Town Council  
FROM: Katy Nomura, Interim Town Manager  
SUBJECT: Authorize the Interim Town Manager to Execute an Agreement with Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. in the Amount of \$37,135 to Assess and Evaluate Artificial Turf and Natural Grass at Creekside Sports Park (CIP Project 831-4404)

**REMARKS:**

Staff received questions from a Council Member that are summarized below. Staff will consider these questions and share them with the consultant team.

1. How often does an artificial turf field need to be rinsed down/watered to remove bacteria and other contaminants for the safety of users?
2. What is the environmental impact of artificial turf on the ground water?
3. What contamination occurs to ground water from fertilizer used on natural turf?
4. Is there natural grass that can be used that decreases water and fertilizer usage?
5. What contaminants are known to enter our groundwater due to artificial turf?
6. What are the cost comparisons over 20 years between natural grass and artificial turf?

Attachment 2 contains public comment received prior to 11:00 a.m. on Tuesday, September 17, 2024.

**Attachment Previously Received with the Staff Report:**

1. Agreement for Consultant Services

**Attachment Received with this Desk Item:**

2. Public comment received prior to 11:00 a.m. on Tuesday, September 17, 2024.

**PREPARED BY:** Nicolle Burnham  
Parks and Public Works Director

---

Reviewed by: Interim Town Manager, Town Attorney, and Finance Director

---

**From:** Pam Bond

**Sent:** Monday, September 16, 2024 11:09 PM

**To:** Rob Rennie <[RRennie@losgatosca.gov](mailto:RRennie@losgatosca.gov)>; Rob Moore <[RMoore@losgatosca.gov](mailto:RMoore@losgatosca.gov)>; Maria Ristow <[MRistow@losgatosca.gov](mailto:MRistow@losgatosca.gov)>; Mary Badame <[MBadame@losgatosca.gov](mailto:MBadame@losgatosca.gov)>; Matthew Hudes <[MHudes@losgatosca.gov](mailto:MHudes@losgatosca.gov)>

**Subject:** Comments regarding Council agenda item 8

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

Dear Los Gatos Town Council members,

I write to ask you to approve the planned assessment to evaluate artificial turf and natural grass at Creekside Sports Park. Please see my letter, attached.

Sincerely,  
Pam Bond

September 16, 2024

Dear Los Gatos Town Councilmembers,

I write to ask you to approve the planned assessment to evaluate artificial turf and natural grass at Creekside Sports Park. A lot has changed in 12 years since the field was first installed. Research about the chemicals in plastic and their effects on humans and the environment has taken off in the past several years and new studies are published with much more frequency. I truly believe that if natural grass fields were maintained better and renovated with better designs we would have enough fields for sports and we wouldn't have to use artificial turf as a crutch.

Because I have seen other assessments that do not accurately take into consideration unbiased research findings or that have used consultants who's interests lie in the quick money made from artificial turf, I have some questions and requests related to this assessment. (To be clear, I am not implying anything about Kimely-Horn here. They have worked on some impressive projects.)

Questions:

1. In evaluating environmental impact of artificial turf, is the filtration system for the current field considered effective at removing PFAS and other chemicals from the water runoff? Test methods for PFAS in water have developed since 2012 as well as analysis of filtration methods. The report should indicate the details of this filtration system stating that it removes PFAS or details for a new filtration.
2. There are visible plastic fibers blown off the current field. Can there be an assessment of this migration outside of the field? I assume any future artificial turf field will have the same issues, adding to the plastic debris along the creekside.
3. Environmental assessment should include the manufacture of the artificial turf and infill products. Artificial turf needs a lot of water to be produced, for example. And communities living near refineries and plastic manufacturing and recycling facilities bare a huge health burden.
4. Will the public have time to review the assessment? It seems like Kimely-Horn consults scientific literature but I am concerned that within their Scope of Services they seem to negate most environmental and life cycle assessments preemptively or have already made their decision based on past research. What if we have experts that we can direct them to for more information, newer research that they may have missed?

A few examples:

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1382668924002023?via%3Dihub>

*In vitro* endocrine and cardiometabolic toxicity associated with artificial turf materials

The Santa Clara County Medical Association has a Policy Recommendation on use of artificial turf published in June 2024.

<https://www.sccma.org/Portals/19/Artificial%20Turf%20Policy%20Recommendation%20SCCMA%20Final%20%206824%20.pdf>

I also know that several community members have already shared a lot of information with council members and I hope that these letters and documents are shared with the assessors.

5. Please be sure that you are looking at the actual usage of the field and not reserved hours.
6. Consider whether other grass fields in Los Gatos could be improved in order to spread the usage out and also reduce the seeming dire need for synthetic turf. Because it really comes down to usable fields whether grass or artificial.
7. I hope that the assessment will include newer natural grass technology like electric and robotic mowers.
8. Any assertions about newer artificial turf being safer should provide proof exclusive of statements made by artificial turf manufacturers who can say whatever they want. For example, TenCate has a new infill-less artificial turf but their “No PFAS” “proof” is from their own lab and only tests to PPM whereas it needs to be tested at PPT (or lower). One artificial turf supplier recently stated at a Santa Clara County Board meeting that the industry “regulates itself.” Which is true, and which is also the problem.

Eurofins, a leading testing lab, has conducted several webinars on PFAS and explained that as tests improve, testing limits will get smaller and as they made more discoveries about the many PFAS chemicals, more and more limits will be placed on their use.

I really hope the assessment will give well balanced, unbiased feedback to help you make an informed decision. To be fair, I don't think this decision should rest with councils and school boards because too often, governing bodies are presented with incomplete or inaccurate information and especially with artificial turf and plastic research, developments in understanding are moving fast. I am seeking better state level regulation of artificial turf (and synthetic playground materials) because I have seen these materials in use in schools and fields and I do not see the value of the flat regular surface outweighing the value of human and environmental health especially when well maintained grass can do the job. There are so many grass fields in our region. Why not better maintain those so that excuses can't be made for outdoor plastic carpets?

With the emphasis on climate change mitigation strategies for schools and cities, there has got to be funding for something like a natural grass playing fields audit of the region to assess what we have, how it can be improved and finding funding in the name of reduced emissions, urban cooling, and human health (less heat impacts, less exposure to plastics).

Sincerely,  
Pam Bond - Los Gatos