



STAFF REPORT

DATE: 04/04/2023

REGULAR

TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Adam Swanepoel, Assistant Public Works Director
REVIEWED BY: Marty Powers, Director of Public Works
Kristina Handt, City Administrator
AGENDA ITEM: Baseball fields – Site Improvements

BACKGROUND:

At the October 2022 Parks Commission meeting, City Planner Ben Hetzel presented results from a community baseball POLCO survey. This 30 day online ballfield survey was designed as part of the analysis for the 2022 ballfield work plan. With money set aside from the Royal Golf Development, funds are to be used for the development of new ballfield or refurbishment of existing ballfields. Currently the city has two competitive ballfields (VFW, Lions) which serve the downtown area and eight recreational fields throughout the community. (Demontreville, Klies, Pebble, Reid, Ridge, Stonegate, Tablyn and Tana)

There were 313 respondents to the 2022 Baseball survey. Summary of those results were:

Would you like to see more ballfields at City parks? 88% - Yes

Would you like to see more recreational or competitive ballfields? – 54% - Competitive

Would you like to see existing recreational ballfields upgraded to competitive ballfields? 84% - Yes

Would you prefer to see multiple ballfields in one location? 82% - Yes

Lake Elmo Baseball Association is the most frequent user of the competitive fields. They also rent Reid Park for youth baseball ranging in ages of 9-13. Mahtomedi Youth Baseball, Oakdale Athletic Assoc., St. Croix Valley Athletic Assoc., Thrive Baseball and Midwest Power Softball are additional renters of the fields throughout the year. During the months of April through July: VFW, Lions, Reid, and Demontreville fields are rented out daily for youth baseball. The competitive fields continue to be rented out through September for both baseball and softball use.

Ideally stakeholders have suggested placement of multiple fields in one location is ideal for practice, games and tournaments. Of the current parks only Pebble and Ridge Park could potentially hold multiple fields, but not exceeding more than two.

History of updates to our current recreational fields have been limited to continued maintenance conducted by our Public Works department. In 2017, Lions Park was a completely renovated field. In 2018 members reviewed the possibility of updating the Demontreville baseball field with input from the Mahtomedi Baseball Association. As the most frequent user of the field, they recommended moving the field and requested additional parking. The Parks Commission approved the bids for improvements to the field, however this was denied by City Council. Minutes from that meeting indicated Council wanted to see some level of buy-in from the community or users of the park. Neither Mahtomedi Baseball nor any other community group would contribute to the cost of the project.

At the October 17, 2022 Parks Commission Meeting, commissioners unanimously approved a motion to direct city staff to explore upgrading existing recreational ballfields in City parks.

On March 20, 2023 the Parks Commission all voted in favor of recommending to City Council the authorizing of Request for Proposal for Design Services to be completed on Reid and Ridge Park for the improvements of the baseball fields

ISSUE BEFORE CITY COUNCIL:

Would the City Council like to conduct a proposal for design on Reid and Ridge Park?

PROPOSAL DETAILS/ANALYSIS:

The city has eight possible fields to consider updating to make usable by current stakeholders. Things to consider are additional resources available that help support a baseball field within the community and its placement. One of the major issues is space. Survey results show a majority of people would like to see multiple fields in one location. Based on the current park system only Pebble and Ridge would be able to fit more than one field at its location. Even the sites capable of having more than one field likely can only accommodate two smaller fields or a combination of a competitive and recreation ball field.

Excavating

Dirt work and excavating will be the most costly expense as staff begins looking at updating current fields. Some of the biggest issues staff currently has with fields is drainage and overall layout of the field. Direction and placement of field within the park should be considered to eliminate sitting water within the playing area. Ideally a field should face North East. This allows for field use throughout the day including spring, summer and fall without the sun becoming a factor to either the pitcher or batter. Currently fields at Tablyn and Reid face the NE direction. Staff has identified Reid and Stonegate fields needing minimal excavating to the area of the playing field.

Parking

Many of the city's parks lack a large parking area for a multi-team event. Having approximately 25-30 parking spaces for a single field and having a minimum of 40 parking stalls for a park with two fields is suggested. Currently fields at Klies, Stonegate and Tana limit users to residential street parking only. This becomes a concern with multiple teams or the regular use of the field with users parking in residential areas. Parking at Demontreville and Reid currently have parking for about 28 cars. Ridge, Tablyn although not marked, currently has space for approximately 10 -15. Placement of parking areas to the field is a concern for many users. Parking too close to the playing area becomes an issue with foul balls striking cars; unintentionally moving parking back into the residential area. Parking too far away limits user's ability to easily transfer player's gear and supplies to and from the field.

Water/Sewer

Access to water and sewer should be considered as we potentially grow the value and usability of our park area. Water is ideal for field irrigation as well as use by regular park users. Water access will allow for continued care of the parks investment into a new field during its first few years of establishing grass areas. Water reuse from a nearby storm water pond can be very beneficial and save thousands of dollars a year on purchasing water. Upfront cost of a water reuse system range from \$80-\$120K which may be more costly in the beginning but ultimately little expense during operation. Having access to water at park locations can also offer the potential to having restrooms or drinking fountain in the future. Currently Klies and Demontreville fields are the only fields that do not have direct access to city water. Options of drilling a well for water access is still available in both of these parks.

Sanitary access is limited to many of the parks, currently Reid and Stonegate have sanitary sewer within proximity that may be accessible. If desired a drain field for sanitary could be an option if space allows.

Electrical

Lighting to a field is ideal for stakeholders to hold events and scheduling multiple games in the evening especially in the spring and fall when daylight hours become limited. Although lighting is a great amenity to a field, members should consider field placement to residential areas when lighting a field. Additional access to electricity can provide the potential to having a scoreboard, concession area and restrooms.

OPTIONS:

Staff has reviewed the current inventory of fields and has made the following suggestions:

Option 1: Reid Park: Staff has identified Reid Park as a field suitable for an update. Reid Park offers parking, access to city water and sewer, and located near the two other competitive fields in the city. Currently Reid Park has a flat outfield/infield and an age appropriate back stop. Staff would recommend adding additional fencing down first and third baseline, hood on the backstop and outfield fencing. In addition, extension of the infield to make it suitable for two separate age groups as well as dugouts and bleachers.

Updating this field would result in a loss of open space. Soccer and Frisbee Clubs also reserve this space throughout the year, adding fencing would likely limit their ability to use this space.

Option 2. Pebble Park: With a current recreation filed, staff has identified Pebble Park suitable for updates to include two recreational ball fields. Fields would have home places near each other, with fields facing opposite directions. Pebble offers a flat area in need of some light excavating to uplift the outfield for better drainage. It also offers access to electricity and city water for irrigation

Pebble Park's lower area is currently reserved by soccer clubs for practice. Adding a second field to the area may limit some of their open space during construction, however with no outfield fence planned, this area could potentially improve the soccer area as well.

Option 3: Ridge Park: With open space available in this park, staff has identified Ridge Park as a suitable area to consider improving the baseball field. Ridge Park offers an expandable area for parking, access to city water, with minor grading needed. Ridge Park has the room capable of holding two recreation fields or a combination of a recreation field and competitive ballfield. If planning for multiple fields, additional excavating and storm water runoff would need to be considered. This area would be a location staff would recommend for a synthetic turf field if a partnership was made with another contributing organization.

Option 4: Stonegate Park: The ball field located in Stonegate Park has approximately three acres of open green space in the six acre park parcel. Stonegate Park has city water and sewer connection capabilities. This park is limited on parking, adding a parking lot in the South or West side of the park could assist with parking issues and provide additional parking for Ivywood Park. With some adjusting, this field could be turned and upgraded to a competitive field.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

A large impact on improving our current baseball fields to updated recreation and competitive fields will be the cost construction and materials. Staff has obtained pricing from vendors to form an idea of costs related to baseball field upgrades. Bolton & Menk (engineering firm) provided staff with a, Preliminary Opinion of Cost document which was prepared for the city of Cottage Grove in the spring of 2022. Some of those costs related to baseball field improvements include:

Excavating - \$50,000-\$100,000 per field

Lighting - \$170, 000

Fencing – 6' – 60/Ft

- Ages 9-11 (480 LF) - \$30,000

- Ages 12-13 (980 LF) - \$50,000

Backstop Fence:

- 10x20x10- 12 Ft Tall - \$11,000 (Recreation Field Backstop)

- 30x20x30 – 20 Ft. Tall - \$20,000 (Competitive Field Backstop)

Dugouts - Concrete floor and wooden structure \$40,000

Water Service – \$80/Ft

Storm Sewer - \$80/Ft

Parking Lot - \$7 -Sq. /FT (40 stalls \$90,000)
Bleachers - \$7, 000 (4 Row 60 seats)
Designing- \$30-\$50,000
Engineering- \$100,000
Irrigation – Baseball Field \$80,000
Turf/Seeding - \$5,000 per Acre (\$15,000 / field)
Infield Clay - \$2 - \$4000 per field
Synthetic Turf - \$6/SF

Pricing to update a field will vary depending on need and desire of the area field. For instance, lighting is an expensive option and is not recommended on recreational fields but should be considered if upgrading to a competitive size field. A storm water plan is also required when more than 6000 sq. feet of soil will be disturbed. Reviewing the possible locations, this would be required at most locations depending on the possible updates. Irrigation can also be an expensive option, however providing water to our investment is critical in the first few years in order to establish a firm and thick grass field.

Cost estimates based off the following numbers would be:

Option 1: Reid Park; Lighting, Backstop, Fencing, Dugouts, additional Parking, Bleachers and Irrigation, Infield clay and Seeding - \$400,000 (1 competitive ballfield)

Option 2: Pebble Park; Engineering, Excavating, Fencing, Backstop, Dugouts, Bleachers, Seeding, Infield Clay and water service - \$250,000 (2- recreational ballfields)

Option 3: Ridge Park; Engineering, Excavating, Backstop, Fencing, Dugouts, Water Service, Storm Water, Parking Lot, Bleachers, Irrigation, Seeding, Lighting - \$880,000. (1 competitive ballfield and 1 Recreational Ballfield) (Adding synthetic turf could cost an additional \$600,000)

Option 4: Stonegate Park: Engineering, Excavating, Parking Lot, Backstop, Fencing, Dugouts, Water Service, Storm Water, Bleachers, Irrigation, Seeding and Lighting - \$575,000. (1-Competitive Ballfield)

At the February Parks Commission meeting a representative from Hill Murray Foundation presented a need for a combination (baseball/softball) field for its school athletes to use for school games and practices. They most commonly need field use during the spring for high school athletic sports. The foundation offered up to \$500,000 in financial assistance for a synthetic turf field. A turf field although more expensive to build, ultimately has little maintenance going forward. This type of material creates a multi-use surface for other uses outside of baseball. This option saves on the installation of an irrigation system and the cost of water used to irrigate the field, mowing and fertilizing each and every season.

The cost of a turf field will depend on the size of the field and the type of synthetic turf. All the same prep work needs to be done when making a grass field or synthetic turf field such as; excavation, 2' sand subbase, drain tile, fabric, porous aggregate and fencing. Adding synthetic turf to a facility could cost an additional \$600,000

RECOMMENDATION:

Parks Commission and Staff recommend the following:

“Move to approve authorizing a Request for Proposal for Design Services to be completed on Reid and Ridge Park for the improvements of the baseball fields.”

ATTACHEMENTS:

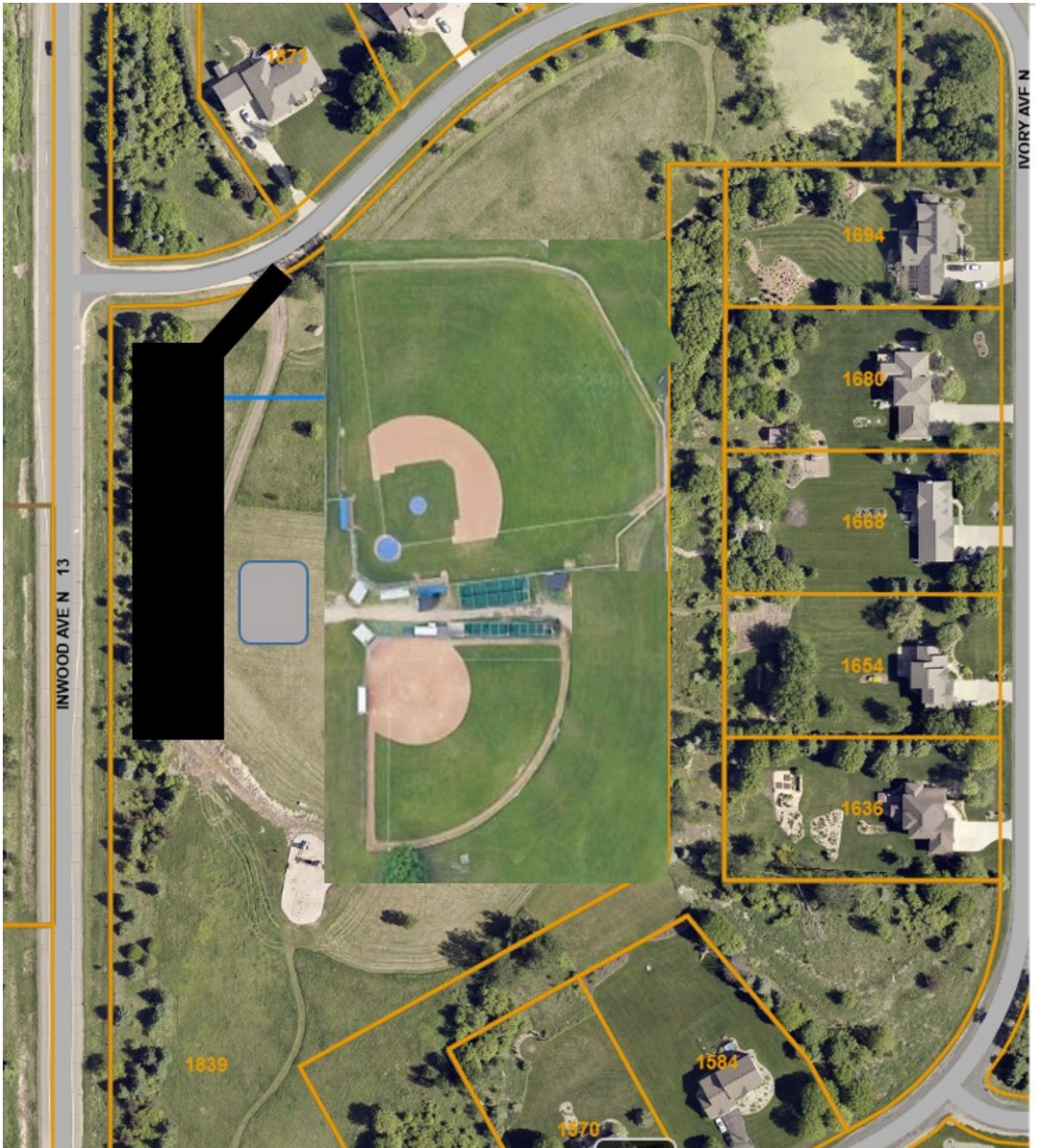
Proposed Reid Park Field Image

Proposed Ridge Park Field Image

Proposed changes to Reid Park Baseball Field



Proposed Changes to Ridge Park



- Expand and improve parking lot
- Add 1 competitive field and 1 recreational field
- Lighting / Irrigation
- Potential site for Synthetic Turf Field