



City Council Staff Report

From: City Manager

Report Type: CONSENT CALENDAR
Lead Department: Community Services

Meeting Date: January 21, 2025

Report #:2411-3828

TITLE

Approval of Professional Service Contract Number C25192988 with Lloyd Consulting Group, LLC., in the Amount Not to Exceed \$232,985 to Conduct a Comprehensive Turf Study for a Period Six Months; CEQA Status – exempt under CEQA regulations 15262 and 15306.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that City Council Approve and authorize the City Manager or designee to execute Contract No. C25192988 (Attachment A), with Lloyd Consulting Group, LLC, to provide a comprehensive turf study that compares synthetic and natural turf athletic fields, for a period of six months and a total amount not-to-exceed \$232,985.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Palo Alto is conducting a comprehensive study to evaluate synthetic and natural turf athletic fields, addressing environmental, health, cost, and usability concerns. Initiated during the FY 2025 budget process, this study aims to guide future decisions on field replacements, including the paused El Camino Park Turf Replacement Project (PG-24000).

The recommended consultant study will be informed by and supplement staff knowledge of local user demand and expectations of City facilities, as well as operational costs and administrative requirements. Lloyd Sports and Engineering, LLC was selected to conduct the study at a cost not exceeding \$232,985. Findings, expected by April 2025, will inform future decisions while aligning with the City's sustainability goals and ensuring equitable field access for the community.

BACKGROUND

The City of Palo Alto Community Services Department's Open Space, Parks, and Golf Division operates and manages athletic fields throughout the City. These fields include both natural and synthetic surfaces that host a variety of athletic activities, such as soccer, lacrosse, camps, and softball, for participants of all ages. Field maintenance, usage, and activities differ significantly

based on the type of turf, and factors such as weather, turf type, maintenance schedules, and field lighting influence field use and scheduling.

The City currently manages synthetic turf fields at El Camino Park, Stanford-Palo Alto Playing Fields (locally known as Mayfield), and Cubberley Community Center. The fields at El Camino and Stanford-Palo Alto are at or near the end of their playable life and require replacement to ensure the fields remain open to the public. A Capital Improvement Project (PG-24000) to replace the fields at El Camino Park with synthetic turf was included in the Fiscal Year 2024 Adopted Capital Budget.

During the May 7¹ and 8², 2024 Finance Committee's review of the proposed Capital Fund Projects, the Finance Committee discussed and approved a recommendation to the Council to study the environmental health and safety and cost analysis of synthetic turf replacement with both synthetic and natural turf, and any additional budget adjustments needed. The City Council approved the study as part of the Fiscal Year 2025 Adopted Budget³. As a result, the turf replacement project at El Camino Park (Capital Improvement Project PG-24000) was put on hold, pending the findings of the study. Replacement of the Stanford- Palo Alto Playing Fields (Capital Improvement Project PG-26000) will proceed in parallel with the study in Fiscal Year 2025, as the fields will have reached the end of usable lifespan. To align with the City's commitment to sustainability and community health, staff will replace the synthetic fields using a natural cork infill material. This project will also help minimize the overall impact on field availability across the city, as athletic field usage is currently at capacity. By strategically managing field renovations and ensuring efficient project timelines, the city aims to maintain consistent access for sports and recreational activities during the replacement process.

ANALYSIS

The City of Palo Alto has recognized the need for a comprehensive study to thoroughly evaluate synthetic and natural turf fields including usability, health implications, environmental effects, maintenance costs, and community preferences. As concerns about the potential environmental and human health risks associated with synthetic turf—particularly its connection to PFAS chemicals⁴ and microplastic pollution—continue to grow, this study seeks

¹ Finance Committee, May 7, 2024; Agenda Item #1; SR# 2405-2969, <https://portal.laserfiche.com/Portal/DocView.aspx?id=72129&repo=r-704298fc>

² Finance Committee, May 8, 2024; Agenda Item #1; Presentation, <https://cityofpaloalto.primegov.com/Portal/viewer?id=0&type=7&uid=43346857-3855-40b5-ac9b-19f4da7d1a72>

³ City Council, June 17, 2024; Agenda Item #28; SR# 2406-3140, <https://portal.laserfiche.com/Portal/DocView.aspx?id=73983&repo=r-704298fc&searchid=004d1d0a-4344-4816-ab2d-c044073c40cb>

⁴ PFAS or per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances are widely used, long lasting chemicals, components of which break down very slowly over time. There are thousands of different PFAS, some of which have been more widely used and studied than others. Due to their widespread use and their persistence in the environment, many PFAS are

to equip the City Council with the data and insights required to make informed and forward-thinking decisions about future field installations and renovations.

This study will also assess the long-term sustainability and impacts on field use, considering the diverse needs of all user groups, from youth athletes to seniors engaging in recreational activities. In addition to analyzing the economic implications, such as lifecycle costs and funding strategies, the study will evaluate the compatibility of field options with Palo Alto's broader sustainability and climate action goals.

In-house staff do not possess the specialized knowledge and capacity required to complete this work alone. To ensure a substantive and impartial analysis, the city intends to partner with a qualified consultant specializing in environmental assessment and municipal planning. The consultant will deliver a data-driven report by April 2025, allowing City Council to integrate findings into the FY 2026 budget process including the review of the Capital Improvement Plan. Parks staff will conduct some of the analysis and community outreach to reduce the consultant scope. Staff will also provide the consultant with knowledge of local user demand and expectations of City facilities, as well as operational costs and administrative requirements.

The scope of work is strategically divided into four key phases:

1) Project Kick off, 2) Community Engagement and Assessment, 3) Analysis and Reporting. 4) Ongoing Project Management and Communication.

The comprehensive report will include the following sections:

- Current Conditions
- Playability
- Maintenance Costs
- Health Hazards
- Cost of Conversion
- Environmental Impact
- Community and User Feedback
- Data Collection & Analysis

By incorporating a holistic approach to this analysis, the City of Palo Alto will be able to establish a forward-looking field management strategy. Staff will use the study to recommend a field management strategy to the City Council, consistent with the City's sustainability goals, financial prudence, and commitment to public health. This strategy will not only inform the City Council's decision-making but also position Palo Alto as a leader in responsible field management practices.

found in the blood of people and animals throughout the world. Source: United States Environmental Protection Agency; <https://www.epa.gov/pfas/pfas-explained>

Procurement Process

A Request for Proposal (RFP) for the project was posted on OpenGov, the City's e-procurement platform, 3,341 vendors were notified. The solicitation period was posted for 21 days, and 3 proposals were received. The solicitation closed on November 6, 2024.

The City received three proposals by the submission deadline of November 6, 2024, from Lloyd Sports and Engineering, LLC; Sports Facilities Management, LLC; and Verde Design, Inc. All proposers met the City's specifications. Lloyd Sports and Engineering, LLC emerged as the highest-scoring bidder, demonstrating a comprehensive understanding of the project's scope and objectives. Their proposal offered a well-defined and feasible solution, highlighting extensive relevant experience, a proven track record of timely performance on similar projects, and a clear commitment to quality and deliverables. While the proposal price was one component of the evaluation scoring, it was not the determining factor, as this RFP prioritized the overall quality, experience, and ability to successfully meet the project's objectives.

Table 1: Summary of Request for Proposal	
<i>Proposal Description</i>	RFP 192988 Comparative Analysis and of Synthetic and Natural Turf Athletic Fields
<i>Proposed Length of Project</i>	January – June 30, 2025
<i>Number of Vendors Notified</i>	3341
<i>Number of Proposals Packages Downloaded</i>	21
<i>Total Days to Respond to Proposal</i>	21
<i>Pre-Proposal Meeting</i>	No
<i>Pre-Proposal Meeting Date</i>	n/a
<i>Number of Proposals Received</i>	3
<i>Proposal Price Range</i>	\$91,925-\$232,985
<i>Public Link to Solicitation</i>	Project overview (opengov.com)

FISCAL/RESOURCE IMPACT

Staff will be working collaboratively to conduct a comprehensive turf study that compares synthetic and natural turf as directed by City Council to be funded by the El Camino Park Turf Replacement Project PG-24000, which was paused in FY 2024. This project has reappropriated funding of approximately \$800,000 in FY 2025, which is sufficient balance for the contract not-to-exceed amount of \$232,985. The results of this study will include potential resource impacts and staff will bring this forward for the City Council's consideration in future budget processes.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Engagement with community field users and other stakeholders will be conducted as part of this project. This could include surveys, focus groups, and community meetings.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Council action on this item is exempt from CEQA review under sections 15262 and 15306 of the CEQA Guidelines because the comprehensive study involves data collection, research, and resource evaluation activities which do not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource and does not commit the City to any particular project or action.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Contract with Lloyd Consulting Group, LLC. C25192988

APPROVED BY:

Kristen O'Kane, Community Services Director