



**CITY OF PALO ALTO**  
**Parks and Recreation Commission**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**Tuesday, March 26, 2024**  
**7:00 PM**

<b>Agenda Item</b>
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5. Field Use Policy Review – Adam Howard – Discussion – [Attachment](#) – (60 min)

**TO:** CITY OF PALO ALTO PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

**FROM:** ADAM HOWARD      **DEPARTMENT:** COMMUNITY SERVICES

**DATE:** March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024

**SUBJECT:** Court and Fields Use Policy- staff review.

**Discussion:**

Recreation staff and the Playing field Policy and Projects Ad Hoc committee from the Parks and Recreation Commission participated in staff level review of the fields and racquet courts policy to discuss how the policy is working and to discuss any issues staff are seeing.

**BACKGROUND:**

The City of Palo Alto has a collection of playing fields. These fields include grass fields, artificial turf fields and skin fields (dirt fields such as baseball fields). Palo Alto also has several courts used for racquet sports such as tennis and pickleball. These spaces are governed by the Fields and Courts policy ([Attachment A](#)). The fields portion of this policy was last updated in 2013, when priority eligibility requirements were changed and time for adult sports were carved out on certain fields and at specific times. The court section of this policy has been altered more recently with major changes from 2020-2023 due to the addition of pickleball courts, pickleball rules and dual use court policies.

**DISCUSSION:**

The current field use policy governing the use of fields in Palo Alto has been in place for 10 years with very little changes. The Playing Field Policy & Projects Ad Hoc felt it was time to provide a review of the policy to see what has been working and what issues staff have observed, specifically around fields

**Strengths:**

- Space allocations provide a fair and balanced distribution of space based on organizational size and residents.
- Allocating fields based on field sizes ensures fields are being used by appropriate age groups

**Potential Areas for Additional Policy Review:**

- Is 51% residency for youth groups enough or should percentage be increased over time?
- Priority seasons (Fall -soccer and football, Spring – Lacrosse, softball, baseball, summer- all priority groups). Does seasonal priority still work?

- Allocations are based on each team practicing twice a week, reality is teams practice more than that. This leads to putting more teams on each practice slot. Is this an issue?
- Residency Verification- Are there better methods?

Staff feels these are policy questions that would need additional consideration and community input before deciding if policy changes are needed.

### **Recommended Updates:**

Staff discussions with the Ad Hoc also brought to light some field issues that can be addressed without policy change.

Field and Racquet Court Use policy clarifications: Staff feels some simple word changes and formatting are needed to the policy to reflect changes in court usage. Suggested edits include changing “tennis court” to racquet court to reflect the different uses of Palo Alto courts. These minor changes can be seen on [Attachment B](#). Since these minor changes don’t change policy, they would not require City Council approval or additional levels of input.

Goal Storage Issues: Staff has seen continued issues around goals being left out on fields after use. Although organizations can have permits removed for not storing goals correctly, staff feels a better first step to correct this issue is to provide a reminder at the start of each season which will include a map of each field with goal locations clearly marked. This would also include a plan for more regular changes of lock combinations to reduce unauthorized use. Staff feels this helps communicate to the numerous coaches that use each field and provides everyone the same information. If this step doesn’t work, fines or other methods will be discussed.

Garbage issues at tournaments: Staff have observed issues with garbage overflowing and being left on sites after tournaments. Tournaments bring in larger crowds than typical games and with that comes larger amounts of garbage. Staff will provide each site being used extra garbage bags and/or extra garbage cans where needed to help reduce impact. Staff will also provide the hosts of the tournaments detailed instructions making it clear it’s the organizations responsibility to clean up all trash and remove all overflow garbage by placing in site dumpsters. Staff will include maps for each site, with locations of dumpster provided. This should help reduce garbage issues. If this doesn’t reduce the issue, staff will investigate adding cleaning deposits to tournament fees to ensure garbage pickup.

### **RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS**

Staff believes that outreach to the primary field users to gather feedback on how the policy is working is in order. Staff can begin gathering information from users by surveying each of the primary field users. With that information, staff, and the Ad Hoc can begin identifying potential

issues and possible solutions. Field users and members of the public would then be invited to discuss issues and possible policy changes.

Attachments:

Attachment A: Field Court Policy

Attachment B: Policy Edits



## *City of Palo Alto Field and Court Use Policy*

The City of Palo Alto (the “City”) Field Use Policy (and the procedures adopted hereunder) has been established to ensure that City-owned, -maintained and –managed park and athletic field facilities, including the fields owned by the Palo Alto Unified School District (the “District”) are utilized for recreational, athletic, cultural, educational, social and community service functions that meet the needs and interests of the community, and that permitted users are fully informed as to the City’s guidelines that govern their use of the park and athletic field facilities.

### **Purpose:**

- To strive to provide all Palo Alto residents with an opportunity to participate in their activity of choice.
- To establish policies and procedures governing the use of City parks, fields, tennis courts and District playing fields managed by the City of Palo Alto.
- To ensure Palo Alto residents have priority access to parks and playing fields.
- To provide for a variety of activities reflecting the athletic preferences of Palo Alto residents.
- To contribute a proportionate amount of field use time to regional organizations that Palo Alto residents participate in.
- To collect fees for the use of fields, in support of their ongoing maintenance.
- To ensure that decisions regarding the use of City parks and athletic complexes and District sites are used in the best interests of the neighborhoods, sports organizations and residents of Palo Alto.
- To ensure that appropriate sports are permitted on appropriate fields.

Field use permits are required for exclusive field use or for any on-going seasonal, organized use of athletic fields maintained or managed by the City. In accordance with Palo Alto Municipal Code Section, the Recreation and Golf Services Division issues field use permits. The exclusive use of a field or an athletic field requires the making of an advance reservation and is subject to fee and security deposit requirements.

### **Appendix A - Available Facilities and Park Amenities**

### **Appendix B - Field and Tennis Court Use Guidelines**

#### **I. Field Use Permitting:**

Field space usage requests are considered at three separate and seasonal intervals per fiscal year. Field space is awarded on a priority basis at the beginning of each fall, winter/spring, and summer period. After the original requests are processed on a priority basis, the fields are available to other non-priority requests. To apply for an Athletic Field Use Permit, an applicant must submit a field request form to the Field Coordinator/Supervisor. Field request forms are

available:

1. Online at [www.cityofpaloalto.org](http://www.cityofpaloalto.org);
2. In person at Cubberley Community Center; or
3. By requesting a form from the Field Coordinator/Supervisor at [playingfields@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:playingfields@cityofpaloalto.org)

**Fall** ~~ The first day of school (mid-August) through December 31.

**Winter/Spring** ~~ January 1 through the last day of school (end of May early June).

**Summer** ~~ early June through mid-August.

## **II. Field Request Form Deadlines:**

1. For Fall seasonal use dates, request forms must be submitted by May 1.
2. For Winter/Spring seasonal use dates, request forms must be submitted by November 1.
3. For Summer seasonal use dates, request forms must be submitted by March 1.

## **III. Seasonal Use Priority:**

- Palo Alto resident youth non-profit soccer and football organizations have field use priority on soccer/baseball/football joint use fields during the Fall use period.
- Palo Alto resident youth non-profit baseball, softball and lacrosse organizations have field priority on the baseball-softball/soccer joint use fields during the Spring use period.

## **IV. Exceptions to Seasonal Priority:**

- District programs have annual priority on District fields only.
- Palo Alto Recreation-administered programs have annual use priority on all fields.

## **V. Eligibility:**

The following are the field use guidelines that will be used for priority booking at the start of each seasonal brokering period. Priority will be given in the order below.

1. City and District Activities
2. Palo Alto Youth, non-profit\* organizations with at least 51% residency
3. Palo Alto Adult, non-profit\* organizations with at least 35% residency
4. Non-profit groups with 25% or more Palo Alto residence will be given priority for any remaining fields
5. Other groups not meeting the 25% requirement or for profit will be considered at staff discretion.

\*To qualify for non-profit rates, organizations must provide a copy of their letter of non-profit status from the California Secretary of State's Office with their non-profit ID number indicated thereon, Payment with an organization's check or charge card is required.

Priority organizations (groups 2 and 3) will have the opportunity to discuss field use needs with City staff facilitating, and attempt to negotiate an agreement on field allocations. The negotiated field allocation agreement must be consistent with section VI Field Allocations below. If two or more organizations are unable to agree with a negotiated field allocation agreement then a round robin brokering system will be used to determine the allocation of fields among organizations.

Organizations will receive priority based on seasonal sports first (see Section III), followed by organizations that meet the priority residency requirement above. Adults and youth will broker separately with slots set aside for youth and adults as defined in Section VI. Groups with less than 25% residents and for-profit groups, reserve fields on a first come first served basis as available.

If a round robin process is used the first round will be based on the number of residents in each organization. The number of residents will be broken down to equal a number of teams. Each team will then receive two practice slots a week and 0.55 game slots per weekend. The second round will broker for the total number of teams each organization has, less the teams that received fields in the first round. For more information please see Field and Tennis Court Use Guidelines.

**VI. Field Allocations:** Fields will be permitted for the activities in which the field(s) are intended for, designed for, classified as, or for activities conducted in a manner that does not compromise public safety or field quality and integrity.

- Youth organizations or leagues that qualify for priority booking will be allocated fields as follows:
  - Two (2) practice slots\* per team per week.
  - 0.55 game slots\* per team per week
  - Fields will be allocated to age appropriate athletes
  - 7v7 or younger - small fields
  - 8v8 -10v10 - medium fields
  - 11v11 - large fields

*\*Game slots, Practice Slots and age breakdowns are defined based on sport and field  
When priority booking takes place, slots are reserved for the entire brokering period. Slots brokered do not change because of daylight savings.*

- At the Stanford/Palo Alto Playing Fields, the 8:30-10:00 pm weekday slots will be reserved for adult league play Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday. 7pm-10pm slots are reserved for adults on Wednesday and Friday.
  - Sunday mornings from 8:00 am to 12:30 pm, at Terman 1 and 2, JLS 1, 2 and 3 and Mayfield will be reserved for adult league play. **Adult leagues will be held to a maximum of 1 slot per team every other week.** Any additional slots are open to all.

Each group that has seasonal priority can reserve all the slots they require based on the number of teams in their organization.

### **Tournaments:**

Organizations who receive priority brokering may request one tournament a year; that tournament will be given priority of fields use. Tournament dates must be given in advance of brokering and there can only be one tournament a weekend. All additional tournaments are at staff discretion. Additional information found in Field and Tennis Court Use Guidelines.

### **VII Residency:**

A resident is a person residing within the city limits of the City of Palo Alto. Any person owning and paying taxes on real property in Palo Alto, but who is not living in the City, and any person having only a Palo Alto business address, is NOT considered a resident for field use application purposes. Children attending District schools are considered residents for brokering purposes. The City will require identification or documentation of residency. In the event proof of residency cannot be established, the person will be classified as a non-resident and fees and brokering privileges will be adjusted accordingly.

### **VIII. Residency Verification:**

Palo Alto Recreation requires a master league roster complete with players' first and last names alphabetized, address, phone number, team, and proof of residency. Proof of residency may include:

- Palo Alto Utility Number
- Copy of Current driver's license with Palo Alto Address
- Copy of current school I.D. card or verification form (provided by city) signed by school (for youth attending PAUSD school)

Any group or organization found to be misrepresenting its residency status will have its permit revoked for the season and will be excluded from brokering for the following season. In addition, any group or organization found to be reserving field use for any time period time for another organization (that would otherwise have a lower priority for field scheduling) will be penalized by the revocation of its permit for the season for which the permit is issued and that group or organization will be assigned the last (or lowest) priority for field use scheduling for the immediately following season.

### **IX. Fees**

All fees are due and payable **prior** to the issuance of any approved field use permit. The fees and charges for any field use permit are established by the City Council in the Municipal Fee Schedule and are not negotiable; only the Council has the authority to waive fees and charges by amendment to the Municipal Fee Schedule. Fees will be reviewed regularly and adjusted accordingly. Fees can be found in Field and Tennis Court Use Guidelines.

### **X. Deposits**

1. A refundable deposit of one hundred dollars (\$100.00) is required for *all* single athletic field use reservations. Long term renters are required to provide a \$750 refundable security deposit.
2. The City reserves the right to deduct from the security deposit any and all additional charges relating to, but not limited to, janitorial services, maintenance/repair services, staff time, or emergency services that are required as a result of the field use.
3. Forfeiture of all or part of your security/damage deposit may occur for any of the following



reasons:

- a. Damage to facility;
  - b. Misuse of the facility;
  - c. Inadequate cleanup by the permit holder, requiring additional custodial/staff time following the permit holder's use;
  - d. Violation of field use rules
4. If additional fees due and payable exceed the amount of the security deposit, the permit holder will be billed for the balance due. Payment will be due and payable within thirty (30) days of the date of invoice. Fees that are not paid will be assigned for collection to a collections agency and the user group will be ineligible to apply for field use until the unpaid amount is settled in full.

### **Insurance Liability**

A valid insurance certificate is required for use of any City or District field. The insurance certificate must afford one million dollars (\$1,000,000.00) of general liability coverage per occurrence and contain the following information:

- *General liability coverage (property and bodily injury) as evidenced by an insurance certificate with an endorsement naming the City of Palo Alto (CPA) AND the Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) as ADDITIONAL INSURED, and guaranteeing 30 days prior notice to change or cancellation of the policy.*

Use of fields will not be permitted unless a valid insurance certificate has been received by not later than two

(2) business days prior to the scheduled date of use of the field or other facility.

1. The permit holder shall be responsible for any and all damage to the City's or the District's premises, turf, equipment and/or property. If additional maintenance is deemed necessary (in excess of normal services/time) to restore the premises, turf, equipment and/or property to reasonable use by others, the permit holder shall be charged accordingly.
2. The City and the District disclaims responsibility for any accident, injury, liability, loss or damage to person or property as a result of unauthorized field use.
3. The permit holder will be responsible for all actions and omissions that result in damages that are caused by their attendees.

### **XII. Court Usage**

1. Courts are available for reservation for Palo Alto Tennis Club and USTA **tournament/match use only. Mitchell Park Courts 5,6,7 are available for reservation by Pickleball organizations but only for tournaments and only during Pickleball hours.**
2. The City brokers all City and District tennis courts (district courts available weekends, holidays and after 4pm on school days) .
3. Only 50% of the available courts at any location can be reserved at the same time and date unless permitted by the Recreation Department for special requests/tournaments. All other courts will remain open to the general public.
4. Courts are not available for reservation by individuals for private use, including private lessons, picnics and individual play. No person shall provide or offer tennis lessons for compensation on City-owned tennis courts except as part of and approved as a City-sponsored program.
5. Courts are available for individual use on a **first-come, first-served basis**. Each court use is

subject to a one-hour time limit whenever there are others waiting to use the court.

6. Courts are for racquet sports only unless expressly allowed via permit issued by the Community Services Department. No rollerblades, skates, skateboards, or pets are permitted on any court.

7. No individual may solely occupy and use a court if other individuals are waiting to play on that court.

8. Only non-marking soled shoes are allowed on the courts.

**A: Locations:** courts are available at the following locations:

- Cubberley Community Center (6)
- Mitchell Park (7)
- Rinconada Park (9)
- Hoover Park (2)
- Peers Park (2)
- Terman Park (2)
- Weisshaar Park (2)
- Gunn High School (7)
- Palo Alto High School (7)
- JLS Middle School (6)
- Jordan Middle School (4)

**B) Multi striped courts**

Mitchell Park courts 6,7 are stripped with Tennis and Pickleball lines. These multi use courts have designated hours

- Tennis priority hours
  - 2:30pm -10pm Monday-Sunday
- Pickleball priority hours
  - 8am-2:30pm Monday- Sunday
- Hours outside of the priority times are available for first come first serve play.
- Reservations can only be made during priority hours and only for the sport with priority during those times.

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**B: Court Fees for reservation:**

Residents: \$5.00-\$10.00 per court per hour

Non-residents: \$7.00- \$20.00 per court per hour

**XIII. Permit Rules & Regulations**

1 Permits cannot be transferred or assigned to any other person, group or organization for any reason.

2 Users must pick up and remove any trash generated by their activity.

3 The misuse of City or District facilities or the failure to conform to facility regulations, established policies (including the Wet Field Policy) and procedures or any other Federal, State, or local law, rule regulation or ordinance shall be sufficient grounds for the immediate revocation of the permit and/or the denial of any future applications. No refund will be granted.

4 Permit holders shall restrict their use to only those fields or courts specifically reserved and

paid for, as designated in their permit. Other fields or courts may be scheduled by other groups and may not be available. Permit holders must be in possession of their Use Permit in case there is a need to address the question of who has priority use or reservation for the field or court in question. If the permit holder cannot use a field or court due to unauthorized use by another party, the permit holder should contact the Palo Alto Police Department at 650-329-2413. Complaints from surrounding neighborhood residents as to the permittee's activity noise level, litter and debris, and/or disregard of parking regulations could lead to the cancellation of the permit or reservation, the forfeiture of the security deposit, and the denial of facility use in the future. **See Good Neighbor Policy**

### **XIII. Permit Rules & Regulations**

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8 Permit holders shall restrict their use to only those fields or courts specifically reserved and paid for, as designated in their permit. Other fields or courts may be scheduled by other groups and may not be available. Permit holders must be in possession of their Field Use Permit in case there is a need to address the question of who has priority use or reservation for the field or court in question. If the permit holder cannot use a field or court due to unauthorized use by another party, the permit holder should contact the Palo Alto Police Department at 650-329-2413.

9 Complaints from surrounding neighborhood residents as to the permittee's activity noise level, litter and debris, and/or disregard of parking regulations could lead to the cancellation of the permit or reservation, the forfeiture of the security deposit, and the denial of facility use in the future. **See Good Neighbor Policy**

### **XIV. General Rules & Regulations**

*All City of Palo Alto Municipal Codes/Regulations apply to all City and PAUSD fields.*

1. No activity other than softball is permitted at the El Camino Park and Baylands Athletic Center softball fields, unless such activity is expressly allowed by permit.

2. The City reserves the right to cancel an approved reservation due to maintenance needs, overuse of facility, unsafe conditions, or due to a conflict with a City or District event. In these cases, all attempts will be made to provide a minimum of 15 days advance notice and to provide an alternate location for the group's scheduled practice, game or activity. In the event of an emergency, when only short or no notice can be provided, groups must cooperate with the request to not use the facility or risk loss of current permit and denial of future use. If there are no alternate facilities available, the City is not obligated to provide an alternate facility. In case of such event, a full refund will be given.

3. No person shall use an athletic field which is posted as being closed, whether the closure is for excess rainfall or for field maintenance or other reason.

4. All motor vehicles must park in marked stalls in the parking lots or legally on side streets, or be

subject to citation. No unauthorized vehicles shall enter park premises, drive on turf, grounds, playfields, or paved walkways.

5. All dogs must be on a leash and owners must clean up after their dogs.

6. For guidelines regarding facility hours of operations, **see Appendix B.**

7. No portable BBQ's are permitted at any time in any facility.

8. No golf is permitted at any park or sports complex, with the exception of the Palo Alto Municipal Golf Course.

9. Baylands Athletic Center is closed on Mondays for maintenance.

10. No alcohol or tobacco products are allowed on any District property at any time.

11. Athletic fields may be lined prior to a group use. Water soluble spray paint is the only permitted means of lining a field. No fields are permitted to be lined by means of Round Up, Dolomite or other herbicide, which can permanently burn lines into the field. Different color lines should be used for different sports. Soccer shall use white, rugby shall use blue and lacrosse shall use yellow.

12. Vending at a field is permitted only if the vendor is associated with the activity and has received the prior approval of the City's representative.

13. Gambling is prohibited at all City and District property.

14. Soccer goals must be anchored at all times when they are located on the playing fields. When goals are not being utilized for play, they must be secured off the playing fields in a manner which will not permit tipping or create any hazardous condition that could cause injury to any person.

The City of Palo Alto and District are not liable for accidents, injuries or loss of or damage to individuals or property. Should any goal left on site be found not secured and locked up properly, the permittee will be subject to a fine of \$250.00. A subsequent violation will result in revocation of the current field user's permit.

15. The City of Palo Alto encourages partnerships and volunteerism to improve field quality and maintenance; however, in the absence of a written agreement, donations and/or contributions of time does not give any organization priority at any facility. Groups wishing to make alterations to facilities must submit these improvement requests in advance to the City. No groups will be allowed to make any alteration to any facility without first obtaining the City's approval.

## **XV. Field and court releases**

Field and court releases and refunds shall follow guidelines below.

### **Weekday Slots:**

- Field releases done before the start of the permit will receive a full refund.
- Field releases done after the start of the permit must be done by the 7<sup>th</sup> of each month and will receive a 50% refund
- All refunds done after the 7<sup>th</sup> will receive no refund

### **Weekend Slots:**

- Weekend slots can be released up to 3 weeks after the publication of the league game schedule for a full refund.
- Releases after 3 weeks of the publication of the league game schedule can be done by

the 7<sup>th</sup> of each month for a 50% refund.

- All releases done after the 7<sup>th</sup> will receive no refund.

*Users who are found to not be using the field and court space and not releasing can be subject to losing field space for the following brokering period.*

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#### **XVI. Wet Field Policy**

No refunds will be given for field closures due to rain. Field slots can be rescheduled.

Athletic use of wet or saturated fields may cause extensive damage resulting in field closure and costly renovations. Groups shall abide by the **Wet Field Policy** and preserve the life and condition of the fields by not playing on them in wet conditions. The following policy applies to a period of rainfall, over-watered fields and/or irrigation breaks. The “rainout” condition hotline is **650-329-2697**.

- All grass fields are deemed closed to use during rainfall. Play will be allowed during a light mist if the ground is hard and relatively dry at the time field use is considered.
- In the event of rainfall (any precipitation that is greater than a light drizzle on a dry field), the fields will be deemed closed after the cessation of precipitation.

A failure to abide by this policy may result in the revocation of the permit and/or elimination for priority brokering for the following season. Individuals who violate this provision may also be subject to a \$100 fine in accordance with the Palo Alto Municipal Code. Please see Field and Tennis Court Use Guidelines for additional information

#### **XVII. Field Preservation:**

The City will aim to maintain fields uniformly and at the highest possible quality.

Your cooperation is needed to preserve the fields on City and District fields by following these guidelines:

1. Limit the use of cleats. Cleats longer than one-quarter inch (¼”) are prohibited for use on any synthetic turf playing fields.
2. Field use, especially sports practices, should be conducted in a manner that play will take place on different sections of the turf, thus reducing excessive turf wear and damage to any one area.
3. Rotate use of areas (i.e.: use middle of turf area for drills one day and sides of the field the following day), and when possible, stay off of the fringe or bare areas to limit erosion and further damage.
3. Replace turf divots at the end of each day to help re-root the grass.
4. Do NOT use the fields during or after heavy rain, or when wet or muddy, for at least 48 hours
5. Soccer practices shall NOT be held on the infield area of a softball or baseball diamond.
6. Softball, baseball, and T-ball practices shall be held only on designated ball fields in order to prevent injuries to other park users.
7. Remove all equipment at the conclusion of use each day. This includes soccer goals. No equipment shall be allowed to be left unattended on City or District property without the prior approval of the Fields Coordinator.
8. Do not overcrowd fields by scheduling multiple games in areas reserved. Allow a safe distance between fields for safe passage of spectators and participants.

9. Water soluble spray paint is the only approved method of applying lines to the fields. Burning of lines with chemicals or cutting lines into turf areas is not allowed.
10. Report hazards on City property to the Parks Division office at 650-496-6962.
11. Report emergencies (e.g., broken water lines, gushing sprinkler heads, etc.) promptly to Palo Alto Communications at 650-329-2413 who will summon the appropriate personnel. When you make the call, be prepared to fully identify yourself, your location, and the specific nature of the emergency.
12. Do not drive or park cars, motorcycles, or other motorized vehicles on turf areas.
13. Bicycles are prohibited on all synthetic turf fields.
14. No food or beverages, with the exception of water, will be permitted on any synthetic turf field.

**XVIII. Good Neighbor Policy** The purpose of this policy is to ensure that decisions regarding the use of City fields, parks and athletics complexes and District sites are used in the best interests of the neighborhoods, sports organizations, and citizens of Palo Alto. The City has established the following rules and regulations to govern the use of the City's and the District's facilities for the safe and pleasant enjoyment of participants and neighbors. Every person is expected to abide by these rules or be subject to forfeiture of the security deposit and/or loss of the privilege of future use of the facilities.

- 1 All litter and debris that may occur as a result of your event must be picked up and deposited into trash receptacles, where provided, or removed from the premises.
- 2 All groups are responsible for the condition in which they leave the facility. Any excessive clean-up required by City or District crews following your use will be cause for forfeiture of all or part of your damage deposit.
- 3 No amplified music, use of musical instruments, radios, or Public Address System testing or use allowed before 9:00 a.m. or after 8:00 p.m. and is allowed by permit only. In all parks, care shall be taken so that speakers are not directed at residences.
- 4 Complaints from surrounding neighborhood residents as to noise level, litter and debris, and disregard for use of parking regulations could result in cancellation of your reservation, forfeiture of security deposit, and denial of future facility use.
- 5 No person shall park a motor vehicle in such a place or manner as would block or obstruct any gate, entrance, or exit or resident driveway.



## City of Palo Alto Field and Racquet Court Use Policy

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### Purpose:

- To strive to provide all Palo Alto residents with an opportunity to participate in their activity of choice.
- To establish policies and procedures governing the use of City parks, fields, tennisracquet courts and District playing fields managed by the City of Palo Alto.
- To ensure Palo Alto residents have priority access to parks and playing fields.
- To provide for a variety of activities reflecting the athletic preferences of Palo Alto residents.
- To contribute a proportionate amount of field use time to regional organizations that Palo Alto residents participate in.
- To collect fees for the use of fields, in support of their ongoing maintenance.
- To ensure that decisions regarding the use of City parks and athletic complexes and District sites are used in the best interests of the neighborhoods, sports organizations and residents of Palo Alto.
- To ensure that appropriate sports are permitted on appropriate fields.

Field use permits are required for exclusive field use or for any on-going seasonal, organized use of athletic fields maintained or managed by the City. In accordance with Palo Alto Municipal Code Section 22.04.040, the Recreation and Golf Services Division issues field use permits. The exclusive use of a field or an athletic field requires the making of an advance reservation and is subject to fee and security deposit requirements.

### Appendix A - Available Facilities and Park Amenities

### Appendix B—Field and Tennis Racquet Court Use Guidelines

#### Field Use Permitting:

Field space usage requests are considered at three separate and seasonal intervals per fiscal year. Field space is awarded on a priority basis at the beginning of each fall, winter/spring, and summer period. After the original requests are processed on a priority basis, the fields are available to other non-priority requests. To apply for an Athletic Field Use Permit, an applicant must submit a field request form to the Field Coordinator/Supervisor. Field

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request forms are available;

1. Online at [www.cityofpaloalto.org](http://www.cityofpaloalto.org);
2. In person at Cubberley Community Center; or
3. By requesting a form from the Field Coordinator/Supervisor at [playingfields@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:playingfields@cityofpaloalto.org)

**Fall** ~ The first day of school (mid-August) through December 31.

**Winter/Spring** ~ January 1 through the last day of school (end of May early June).

**Summer** ~ early June through mid-August.

## **II. Field Request Form Deadlines:**

1. For Fall seasonal use dates, request forms must be submitted by May 1.
2. For Winter/Spring seasonal use dates, request forms must be submitted by November 1.
3. For Summer seasonal use dates, request forms must be submitted by March 1.

## **III. Seasonal Use Priority:**

- Palo Alto resident youth non-profit soccer and football organizations have field use priority on soccer/baseball/football joint-use fields during the Fall use period.
- Palo Alto resident youth non-profit baseball, softball and lacrosse organizations have field priority on the baseball-softball/soccer joint use fields during the Spring use period.

## **IV. Exceptions to Seasonal Priority:**

- District programs have annual priority on District fields only.
- Palo Alto Recreation-administered programs have annual use priority on all fields.

## **V. Eligibility:**

The following are the field use guidelines that will be used for priority booking at the start of each seasonal brokering period. Priority will be given in the order below.

1. City and District Activities
2. Palo Alto Youth, non-profit\* organizations with at least 51% residency
3. Palo Alto Adult, non-profit\* organizations with at least 35% residency
4. Non-profit groups with 25% or more Palo Alto residence will be given priority for any remaining fields
5. Other groups not meeting the 25% requirement or for profit will be considered at staff discretion.

\*To qualify for non-profit rates, organizations must provide a copy of their letter of non-profit status from the California Secretary of State's Office with their non-profit ID number indicated thereon, Payment with an organization's check or charge card is required.

Priority organizations (groups 2 and 3) will have the opportunity to discuss field use needs with City staff facilitating and attempt to negotiate an agreement on field allocations. The negotiated field allocation agreement must be consistent with section VI Field Allocations

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below. If two or more organizations are unable to agree with a negotiated field allocation agreement, then a round robin brokering system will be used to determine the allocation of fields among organizations.

Organizations will receive priority based on seasonal sports first (see Section III), followed by organizations that meet the priority residency requirement above. Adults and youth will broker separately with slots set aside for youth and adults as defined in Section VI. Groups with less than 25% residents and for-profit groups, reserve fields on a first come first served basis as available.

If a round robin process is used, the first round will be based on the number of residents in each organization. The number of residents will be broken down to equal a number of teams. Each team will then receive two practice slots ~~a-per~~ week and 0.55 game slots per weekend. The second round will broker for the total number of teams each organization has, less the teams that received fields in the first round. ~~For more information please see Field and Tennis Racket Court Use Guidelines.~~

**VI. Field Allocations:** Fields will be permitted for the activities in which the field(s) are intended for, designed for, classified as, or for activities conducted in a manner that does not compromise public safety or field quality and integrity.

- Youth organizations or leagues that qualify for priority booking will be allocated fields as follows:
  - Two (2) practice slots\* per team per week.
  - 0.55 game slots\* per team per week
  - Fields will be allocated to age appropriate athletes
  - 7v7 or younger - small fields
  - 8v8 -10v10 - medium fields
  - 11v11 - large fields

*\*Game slots, Practice Slots and age breakdowns are defined based on sport and field  
When priority booking takes place, slots are reserved for the entire brokering period. Slots brokered do not change because of daylight savings.*

- At the Stanford/Palo Alto Playing Fields, the 8:30-10:00 pm weekday slots will be reserved for adult league play Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday. 7pm-10pm slots are reserved for adults on Wednesday and Friday.
  - Sunday mornings from 8:00 am to 12:30 pm, at Terman [Park](#) 1 and 2, JLS 1, 2 and 3 and Mayfield will be reserved for adult league play. **Adult leagues will be held to a maximum of 1 slot per team every other week.** Any additional slots are open to all.

Each group that has seasonal priority can reserve all the slots they require based on the number of teams in their organization.

**Tournaments:**

Organizations who receive priority brokering may request one tournament a year; that tournament will be given priority of fields use. Tournament dates must be given in advance of brokering and

there can only be one tournament a weekend. All additional tournaments are at staff discretion.  
[Additional information is found in Field and Tennis Racquet Court Use Guidelines.](#)

## **VII Residency:**

A resident is a person residing within the city limits of the City of Palo Alto. Any person owning and paying taxes on real property in Palo Alto, but who is not living in the City, and any person having only a Palo Alto business address, is NOT considered a resident for field use application purposes. Children attending District schools are considered residents for brokering purposes. The City will require identification or documentation of residency. In the event proof of residency cannot be established, the person will be classified as a non-resident and fees and brokering privileges will be adjusted accordingly.

## **VIII. Residency Verification:**

Palo Alto Recreation requires a master league roster complete with players' first and last names alphabetized, address, phone number, team, and proof of residency. Proof of residency may include:

- Palo Alto Utility Number
- Copy of Current driver's license with Palo Alto Address
- Copy of current school I.D. card or verification form (provided by city) signed by school (for youth attending PAUSD school)

Any group or organization found to be misrepresenting its residency status will have its permit revoked for the season and will be excluded from brokering for the following season. In addition, any group or organization found to be reserving field use for any time period time for another organization (that would otherwise have a lower priority for field scheduling) will be penalized by the revocation of its permit for the season for which the permit is issued and that group or organization will be assigned the last (or lowest) priority for field use scheduling for the immediately following season.

## **IX. Fees**

All fees are due and payable **prior** to the issuance of any approved field use permit. The fees and charges for any field use permit are established by the City Council in the Municipal Fee Schedule and are not negotiable; only the Council has the authority to waive fees and charges by amendment to the Municipal Fee Schedule. Fees will be reviewed regularly and adjusted accordingly.

[Fees can be found in Field and Tennis Court Use Guidelines.](#)

## **X. Deposits**

1. A refundable deposit of one hundred dollars (\$100.00) is required for *all* single athletic field use reservations. Long term renters are required to provide a \$750 refundable security deposit.
2. The City reserves the right to deduct from the security deposit any and all additional charges relating to, but not limited to, janitorial services, maintenance/repair services, staff time, or emergency services that are required as a result of the field use.
3. Forfeiture of all or part of your security/damage deposit may occur for any of the following reasons:

- a. Damage to facility;
- b. Misuse of the facility;

- c. Inadequate cleanup by the permit holder, requiring additional custodial/staff time following the permit holder's use;
  - d. Violation of field use rules
4. If additional fees due and payable exceed the amount of the security deposit, the permit holder will be billed for the balance due. Payment will be due and payable within thirty (30) days of the date of invoice. Fees that are not paid will be assigned for collection to a collections agency and the user group will be ineligible to apply for field use until the unpaid amount is settled in full.

#### **XI. Insurance Liability**

A valid insurance certificate is required for use of any City or District field. The insurance certificate must afford one million dollars (\$1,000,000.00) of general liability coverage per occurrence and contain the following information:

- *General liability coverage (property and bodily injury) as evidenced by an insurance certificate with an endorsement naming the City of Palo Alto (CPA) AND the Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) as ADDITIONAL INSURED, and guaranteeing 30 days prior notice to change or cancellation of the policy.*

Use of fields will not be permitted unless a valid insurance certificate has been received by not later than two

(2) business days prior to the scheduled date of use of the field or other facility.

1. The permit holder shall be responsible for any and all damage to the City's or the District's premises, turf, equipment and/or property. If additional maintenance is deemed necessary (in excess of normal services/time) to restore the premises, turf, equipment and/or property to reasonable use by others. The permit holder shall be charged accordingly.
2. The City and the District disclaims responsibility for any accident, injury, liability, loss or damage to person or property as a result of unauthorized field use.
3. The permit holder will be responsible for all actions and omissions that result in damages that are caused by their attendees.

#### **XII. Racquet Court Usage**

The following rules apply to all racquet courts, including tennis, pickleball, and mixed-use courts.

1. The City brokers all City and District racquet courts (district courts available weekends, holidays and after 4pm on school days) .
2. Only 50% of the available courts at any location can be reserved at the same time and date unless permitted by the Recreation Department for special requests/tournaments. All other courts will remain open to the general public.
3. Courts are not available for reservation by individuals for private use, including private lessons, or individual play. No person shall provide or offer lessons for compensation on City-owned racquet courts except as part of and approved as a City-sponsored program.
4. Courts are available for individual use on a first-come, first-served basis.
5. Courts are for racquet sports only unless expressly allowed via permit issued by the Community Services Department. No rollerblades, skates, skateboards, or pets are permitted on any court.

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6. No individual may solely occupy and use a court if other individuals are waiting to play on that court.

7. Only non-marking soled shoes are allowed on the courts.

**A: Tennis Court Locations:**

- o Cubberley Community Center (6)
- o Mitchell Park (4 permanent, 2 mixed - use)
- o Rinconada Park (9)
- o Hoover Park (2)
- o Peers Park (2)
- o Terman Park (2)
- o Weisshaar Park (2)
- o Gunn High School (7)
- o Palo Alto High School (7)
- o JLS Middle School (6)
- o Jordan Middle School (4)

**B) Pickleball Court Location:**

- Mitchell Park (8 permanent, 7 mixed -use)

**C) Mixed Use Court Location**

Mitchell Park courts 6,7 are striped with Tennis and Pickleball lines. These multi use courts are prioritized for pickleball 7 days a week from 8am-10pm. Tennis can use the space if vacant but must surrender space for pickleball play.

**D: Court Fees for reservation:**

**Fee listed for one tennis court or four pickleball courts**

Residents: \$5.00-\$10.00 per court per hour

Non-residents: \$7.00- \$20.00 per court per hour

**XIII. Tennis Court Usage-Rules**

The following rules apply to tennis courts.

1. ~~4~~ Tennis Courts are available for reservation for Palo Alto Tennis Club and USTA tournament/match use only.
2. Courts are available for individual use on a first-come, first-served basis
3. Each court use is subject to a one-hour time limit whenever there are others waiting to use the court.
4. No individual may solely occupy and use a court if other individuals are waiting to play on that court.

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**A: Locations: tennis courts are available at the following locations:-**

- ~~Cubberley Community Center (6)~~
- ~~Mitchell Park (4)~~
- ~~Rinconada Park (9)~~
- ~~Hoover Park (2)~~
- ~~Peers Park (2)~~
- ~~Terman Park (2)~~
- ~~Weisshaar Park (2)~~
- ~~Gunn High School (7)~~
- ~~Palo Alto High School (7)~~
- ~~JLS Middle School (6)~~
- ~~Jordan Middle School (4)~~

**C: Court Fees for reservation:-**

~~Residents: \$5.00-\$10.00 per court per hour~~  
~~Non residents: \$7.00-\$20.00 per court per hour~~

**XIII. Pickleball Court Rules**

The following rules apply to pickleball courts.

1. Courts are available on a first come, first served basis for both doubles and singles play.
2. If all courts are full and players are waiting, court time is limited to 20 minutes. Players can rotate back onto courts as many times as they desire.
3. When courts are full, waiting players may place paddles next to the net of a game in play. When the game is over, players will relinquish the court to those waiting, as follows:
  - a. 4 paddles down: all players leave court to those waiting.
  - b. 2 paddles down: the winning team may stay on, or the waiting players may choose to play singles.
4. Double stacking of paddles (playing a game while having a second paddle waiting on another court) is not allowed.
5. City Permits and Recreation Programs have priority over drop in play.
6. An individual may not hold a court when players are waiting.
7. Court shoes only, no cleats allowed.
8. No wheeled vehicles allowed inside fence.
- 9.

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~~10.9.~~ ~~11.~~ ~~12.~~ No private lessons for compensation permitted.

#### **XIV. Permit Rules & Regulations**

- 1 Permits cannot be transferred or assigned to any other person, group or organization for any reason.
- 2 Users must pick up and remove any trash generated by their activity.
- 3 The misuse of City or District facilities or the failure to conform to facility regulations, established policies (including the Wet Field Policy) and procedures or any other Federal, State, or local law, rule regulation or ordinance shall be sufficient grounds for the immediate revocation of the permit and/or the denial of any future applications. No refund will be granted.
- 4 Permit holders shall restrict their use to only those fields or courts specifically reserved and paid for, as designated in their permit. Other fields or courts may be scheduled by other groups and may not be available. Permit holders must be in possession of their Field Use Permit in case there is a need to address the question of who has priority use or reservation for the field or court in question. If the permit holder cannot use a field or court due to unauthorized use by another party, the permit holder should contact the Palo Alto Police Department at 650-329-2413.
- 5 Complaints from surrounding neighborhood residents as to the permittee's activity noise level, litter and debris, and/or disregard of parking regulations could lead to the cancellation of the permit or reservation, the forfeiture of the security deposit, and the denial of facility use in the future. -See [Section XXIV. Good Neighbor Policy](#)

#### **XV. General Rules & Regulations**

*All City of Palo Alto Municipal Codes/Regulations apply to all City and PAUSD fields.*

1. No activity other than softball is permitted at the El Camino Park and Baylands Athletic Center softball fields, unless such activity is expressly allowed by permit.
2. The City reserves the right to cancel an approved reservation due to maintenance needs, overuse of facility, unsafe conditions, or due to a conflict with a City or District event. In these cases, all attempts will be made to provide a minimum of 15 days advance notice and to provide an alternate location for the group's scheduled practice, game or activity. In the event of an emergency, when only short or no notice can be provided, groups must cooperate with the request to not use the facility or risk loss of current permit and denial of future use. If there are no alternate facilities available, the City is not obligated to provide an alternate facility. In case of such event, a full refund will be given.
3. No person shall use an athletic field which is posted as being closed, whether the closure is for excess rainfall or for field maintenance or other reason.
4. All motor vehicles must park in marked stalls in the parking lots or legally on side streets, or be subject to citation. No unauthorized vehicles shall enter park premises, drive on turf, grounds, playfields, or paved walkways.
5. All dogs must be on a leash and owners must clean up after their dogs.
6. For guidelines regarding facility hours of operations, **see Appendix A.**
7. No portable BBQ's are permitted at any time in any facility.
8. No golf is permitted at any park or sports complex, with the exception of the Palo Alto

Municipal Golf Course.

9. Baylands Athletic Center is closed on Mondays for maintenance.

10. No alcohol or tobacco products are allowed on any District property at any time.

11. Athletic fields may be lined prior to a group use. Water soluble spray paint is the only permitted means of lining a field. No fields are permitted to be lined by means of Round Up, Dolomite or other herbicide, which can permanently burn lines into the field. Different color lines should be used for different sports. Soccer shall use white, rugby shall use blue and lacrosse shall use yellow.

12. Vending at a field is permitted only if the vendor is associated with the activity and has received the prior approval of the City's representative.

13. Gambling is prohibited at all City and District property.

14. Soccer goals must be anchored at all times when they are located on the playing fields. When goals are not being utilized for play, they must be secured off the playing fields in a manner which will not permit tipping or create any hazardous condition that could cause injury to any person. The City of Palo Alto and District are not liable for accidents, injuries or loss of or damage to individuals or property. Should any goal left on site be found not secured and locked up properly, the permittee will be subject to a fine of \$250.00. A subsequent violation will result in revocation of the current field user's permit.

15. The City of Palo Alto encourages partnerships and volunteerism to improve field quality and maintenance; however, in the absence of a written agreement, donations and/or contributions of time does not give any organization priority at any facility. Groups wishing to make alterations to facilities must submit these improvement requests in advance to the City. No groups will be allowed to make any alteration to any facility without first obtaining the City's approval.

#### **XVI. Field and Racquet eCourt Releases**

Field and racquet court releases and refunds shall follow guidelines below.

##### **Weekday Slots:**

- Field releases done before the start of the permit will receive a full refund.
- Field releases done after the start of the permit must be done by the 7<sup>th</sup> of each month and will receive a 50% refund
  - All refunds done after the 7<sup>th</sup> will receive no refund

##### **Weekend Slots:**

- Weekend slots can be released up to 3 weeks after the publication of the league game schedule for a full refund.
- Releases after 3 weeks of the publication of the league game schedule can be done by the 7<sup>th</sup> of each month for a 50% refund.
- All releases done after the 7<sup>th</sup> will receive no refund.

*Users who are found to not be using ~~the a~~ field ~~and-or~~ racquet court space and not releasing can be subject to losing field space for the following brokering period.*

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## **XVII. Wet Field Policy**

No refunds will be given for field closures due to rain. Field slots can be rescheduled.

Athletic use of wet or saturated fields may cause extensive damage resulting in field closure and costly renovations. Groups shall abide by the **Wet Field Policy** and preserve the life and condition of the fields by not playing on them in wet conditions. The following policy applies to a period of rainfall, over-watered fields and/or irrigation breaks. The “rainout” condition hotline is **650-329-2697**.

- All grass fields are deemed closed to use during rainfall. Play will be allowed during a light mist if the ground is hard and relatively dry at the time field use is considered.
- In the event of rainfall (any precipitation that is greater than a light drizzle on a dry field), the fields will be deemed closed after the cessation of precipitation.

A failure to abide by this policy may result in the revocation of the permit and/or elimination for priority brokering for the following season. Individuals who violate this provision may also be subject to a \$100 fine in accordance with the Palo Alto Municipal Code. [Please see Field and Tennis Racquet Court Use Guidelines for additional information](#)

## **XVIII. Field Preservation:**

The City will aim to maintain fields uniformly and at the highest possible quality.

Your cooperation is needed to preserve the fields on City and District fields by following these guidelines:

1. Limit the use of cleats. Cleats longer than one-quarter inch (¼”) are prohibited for use on any synthetic turf playing fields.
2. Field use, especially sports practices, should be conducted in a manner that play will take place on different sections of the turf, thus reducing excessive turf wear and damage to any one area.
3. Rotate use of areas (i.e.: use middle of turf area for drills one day and sides of the field the following day), and when possible, stay off of the fringe or bare areas to limit erosion and further damage.
3. Replace turf divots at the end of each day to help re-root the grass.
4. Do NOT use the fields during or after heavy rain, or when wet or muddy, for at least 48 hours
5. Soccer practices shall NOT be held on the infield area of a softball or baseball diamond.
6. Softball, baseball, and T-ball practices shall be held only on designated ball fields in order to prevent injuries to other park users.
7. Remove all equipment at the conclusion of use each day. This includes soccer goals. No equipment shall be allowed to be left unattended on City or District property without the prior approval of the Fields Coordinator.
8. Do not overcrowd fields by scheduling multiple games in areas reserved. Allow a safe distance between fields for safe passage of spectators and participants.
9. Water soluble spray paint is the only approved method of applying lines to the fields. Burning of lines with chemicals or cutting lines into turf areas is not allowed.
10. Report hazards on City property to the Parks Division office at 650-496-6962.
11. Report emergencies (e.g., broken water lines, gushing sprinkler heads, etc.) promptly to Palo Alto Communications at 650-329-2413 who will summon the appropriate personnel. When you make the call, be prepared to fully identify yourself, your location, and the specific nature of the emergency.
12. Do not drive or park cars, motorcycles, or other motorized vehicles on turf areas.



13. Bicycles are prohibited on all synthetic turf fields.
14. No food or beverages, with the exception of water, will be permitted on any synthetic turf field.

**XVIVX. Good Neighbor Policy** The purpose of this policy is to ensure that decisions regarding the use of City fields, parks and athletics complexes and District sites are used in the best interests of the neighborhoods, sports organizations, and citizens of Palo Alto. The City has established the following rules and regulations to govern the use of the City's and the District's facilities for the safe and pleasant enjoyment of participants and neighbors. Every person is expected to abide by these rules or be subject to forfeiture of the security deposit and/or loss of the privilege of future use of the facilities.

- 1 All litter and debris that may occur as a result of your event must be picked up and deposited into trash receptacles, where provided, or removed from the premises.
- 2 All groups are responsible for the condition in which they leave the facility. Any excessive clean-up required by City or District crews following your use will be cause for forfeiture of all or part of your damage deposit.
- 3 No amplified music, use of musical instruments, radios, or Public Address System testing or use allowed before 9:00 a.m. or after 8:00 p.m. and is allowed by permit only. In all parks, care shall be taken so that speakers are not directed at residences.
- 4 Complaints from surrounding neighborhood residents as to noise level, litter and debris, and disregard for use of parking regulations could result in cancellation of your reservation, forfeiture of security deposit, and denial of future facility use.
- 5 No person shall park a motor vehicle in such a place or manner as would block or obstruct any gate, entrance, or exit or resident driveway.