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INTRODUCTION

Demand for sports fields by community sports leagues is high in the Northern Chester County region (the Region). Organized sports leagues offer competitive baseball, softball, soccer, football, lacrosse, basketball, and swimming and diving, serving primarily ages 6 through 12. Due to the heavy use of facilities by youth leagues, there are no adult sports leagues. Leagues for adult sports are common throughout Pennsylvania but very limited in areas without sufficient sports fields. Research found that adults do not even bother to request field or gym use as all available facilities are used almost exclusively for youth athletics.

Leagues frequently comment to township officials and staff that more fields are needed, but they have limited, single league data, if any at all, to support their claims. This Appendix compiles league data on numbers of participants, teams, seasons of play, and fields used; establishes which fields are publicly owned and dedicated to recreation versus those borrowed from other public and private landowners; analyzes the number of fields needed to support these youth leagues and future adult leagues, as well as proper field rest; and offers suggestions on securing more public fields and developing more diversified field opportunities.

INVENTORY

There are basically three types of athletic fields:

- **Diamond Fields** for baseball, softball, and t-ball.
- **Rectangular Fields** for football, soccer, lacrosse, field hockey, and similar games. It is important to note that maintenance on rectangular fields is essential given the varied play on the particular field. For example, sports in which the ball’s movement is largely in hand or in the air, such as lacrosse or football, do not require the higher quality field surface needed by sports in which the ball is largely in contact with the field surface, such as soccer and field hockey.
- **Overlay Fields** are fields in which a designated field is lined out over an existing field for another purpose. The most common is a rectangular field overlaid on the outfield of a diamond field. There are two issues related to overlay fields: proper maintenance and conflicts due to year-round play.

The inventory of fields used by sports leagues found six 90-foot baseball fields, 16 60-foot softball/Little League fields, and 14 rectangular fields for soccer, football, and/or lacrosse for public use or quasi-public use (league use by permission) in the Region, as well as numerous other fields used

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outside the region. *Table A9.1* shows diamond fields and *Table 2* lists rectangular fields. Both tables sort fields by their ownership and location, namely on public recreation lands (in township parks), on other public lands (public school or fire company grounds), or on private lands. The tables also indicate compliance with regulation dimensions and optimal orientation, as well as field lighting conditions.

Table A9.1: Public and Private Diamond Fields used in Northern Chester County

Fields	Location	Field Conditions	Regulation Dimensions	Optimal Orientation	Lighting
Fields on Public Recreation Lands					
2 90-foot Sr. Baseball fields	Kenilworth Park, North Coventry	▪ Poor	2	No	1
1 60-foot Jr. Baseball field Anderson Field	River Bend Park, North Coventry	▪ Poor as a result of overlapping use	1; soccer, yes	No	No
1 60-foot Jr. Baseball field Batdorf Field	River Bend Park, North Coventry	▪ Poor as a result of overlapping use	1; soccer, modified	Yes	No
1 60-foot Little League field	Andrew Evans Park, West Vincent	▪	1	No	No
1 60-foot Little League field	Community Park on the Ridge, East Vincent	▪	1	No	No
Subtotal - 2 90-foot Fields and 4 60-foot Fields on Public Recreation Lands			6	1	1
Fields on Other Public Lands					
1 90-foot Sr. Baseball field	OJR HS, South Coventry	▪ Good	1	1	No
2 90-foot Sr. Baseball fields	OJR MS, South Coventry	▪ Good	2	2	No
1 60-foot field	North Coventry Elementary School	▪ Fair, no infield	1	1	No
2 70-foot Jr. Baseball fields	Spring City	▪ Poor as a result of heavy use	2	2	No
2 60-foot Jr. Baseball fields	Elementary/SFYAL		2		
1 45-foot T-Ball field	Complex, Spring City		1		
4 60' Little League fields (1 used for T-Ball)	Wampler Complex, North Coventry	▪ Outfields are too short	4	1	2
3 60' Little League fields	Kimberton Fire Company, East Pikeland	▪	3	1	2
Subtotal - 3 90' Fields, 2 70' Fields, 9 60' Fields and 1 45' Fields on Other Public Lands			16	8	4
Total - 5 90' Fields, 2 70' Fields, 13 60' Fields and 1 45' Fields on Public Lands			22	9	5

GEYA – Glenmoore-Eagle Youth Association; SFYAL – Spring-Ford Youth Athletic League; OJR – Owen J. Roberts School District

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Public and private diamond fields used outside of the Region include:

- 1 90-foot deSanno Field in Phoenixville used by Phoenixville Babe Ruth League, where parking is a reported challenge. The site is also proposed to be replaced by the French Creek Parkway.
- 1 90-foot field in Hickory Park used by GEYA.
- 1 60-foot field in Victory Park, Royersford, used by SFYAL Boys Jr. Baseball, Girls Softball.
- 1 60-foot field at Brooke Elementary School used by SFYAL Boys Jr. Baseball, Girls Softball.
- 1 60-foot field at Royersford Elementary School used by SFYAL Boys Jr. Baseball, Girls Softball.
- 2 60-foot fields at Springton Manor Elementary, Wallace Township, used by SFYAL Boys Jr. Baseball, Girls Softball, and GEYA (Little League).
- 3 60-foot fields at Manderach Park, Limerick, used by SFYAL Boys Jr. Baseball, Girls Softball.
- 2 60-foot fields at Hickory Park used by GEYA (Little League).
- 1 60-foot field at Brandywine Wallace Elementary School, East Brandywine, used by GEYA.

Table A9.2: Public and Private Rectangular Fields used in Northern Chester County

Fields	Location	Field Conditions	Regulation Dimensions	Optimal Orientation	Lighting
Fields on Public Recreation Lands					
1 soccer field	River Bend Park, North Coventry	▪ Fair	(U16)	No	No
2 soccer fields	Pine Creek Park, West Pikeland	▪ Fair	2	No	No
1 multi-use field	Andrew Evans Park, West Vincent	▪	1	No	No
1 multi-use field	Community Park on the Ridge, East Vincent	▪ Fair as a result of overlapping use	1	No	No
1 multi-use field	Connie Batdorf Park, South Coventry	▪ Fair as a result of overlapping use	1	No	No
Subtotal - 3 Soccer and 3 Multi-use Fields on Public Recreation Lands			5	0	0
Fields on Other Public Lands					
1 turf field (stadium)	OJR HS, South Coventry	▪ Good	1	1	1
1 turf field (north field)	OJR HS, South Coventry	▪ Good	1	1	1
1 turf field (south field)	OJR HS, South Coventry	▪ Good	1	1	1
Subtotal - 3 Turf Fields on Other Public Lands			3	3	3
Fields on Private Lands					
1 soccer field	Montgomery School, West Pikeland	▪	1	No	1
1 60yd x 100yd field	Ludwig's Corner Horse Show	▪ Poor as a resulting	1	No	No
1 40yd x 60yd area	Grounds,	of multi-purpose			
2 25yd x 50yd area	West Vincent	use			
3 15yd x 30yd area					
1 soccer field	Parkerford Brethren Church, East Coventry	▪	1	No	No
Subtotal - 3 Soccer Fields on Private Lands			3	0	1
Total 6 (grass) Soccer Fields, 3 (grass) Multi-use Fields, and 3 Turf Fields			11	3	4

GEYA – Glenmoore-Eagle Youth Association; OJR – Owen J. Roberts School District

Additionally, grass lawns at several elementary schools are used as practice areas.

Public and private rectangular fields used outside of the Region include:

- 2 25-yard x 50-yard areas at Shamona Creek Elementary School, Uwchlan, used by GEYA Soccer.
- 1 40-yard x 70-yard area at Springton Manor Elementary School, Wallace, used by GEYA Soccer.
- 3 15-yard x 30-yard areas at Pickering Valley Elementary School, Upper Uwchlan, used by GEYA Soccer.
- 2 15-yard x 30-yard areas at Windsor Baptist Church, Uwchlan, used by GEYA Soccer.
- 1 practice field at Spring City Elementary School used by Penn Premier Lacrosse.
- 1 turf field (field hockey) at the Longstreth Academy used by Penn Premier Lacrosse.
- 1 indoor turf field at 422 SportsPlex used by Coventry Wildcats Football and Coventry Youth Lacrosse.

FIELD NEED (SUPPLY-DEMAND-NEED) ANALYSIS

The process for assessing the need for additional athletic facilities is based upon a classic supply-demand-need analysis.

- **Field Supply** is the actual field availability in any given season of play. Some baseball and softball fields have an overlapping soccer field on the outfield so the fields are counted as one field in spring/summer for baseball or softball and one field for soccer in fall.
- **Field Demand** is the actual current use by each sport for 2010, the most recent full year. The community has identified the standard as two practices and one game per week early in the season supplanted by a full game schedule that may or may not include practice time that would cover three visits per week.
- **Field Need** is calculated by distributing the hours of demand over the fields used by each sport.

ATHLETIC FIELD SUPPLY

Work sessions with sports leagues and interviews with league representatives, townships, school districts, and DARC (Downington Area Recreation Commission) discussed the results of the field inventory beyond the shortage of facilities to serve the existing participants. The field capacity in the Region is so limited that no fields can be rested for maintenance purposes. There are no formalized sports turf management programs in place. The Owen J. Roberts School District has installed three synthetic turf fields to manage the heavy use by its sports programs and community sports leagues, and to control field maintenance costs.

The athletic field supply in the Region appears to be a major issue. The high demand can be exemplified by leagues that rent private facilities out of the area because they cannot get field time in the Region. While in the past sports were played during one traditional season, such as baseball in spring and summer and soccer in the fall, sports are now played throughout the year. Football tends to be the only sport played in a single season, the fall.

Field supply is not only a number. Other important factors include playability, the culture of use, league transformation of fields, climate, and ownership. How playable fields are depends upon their construction, maintenance, weather, lighting, and intensity and length of use. In the case of the Region,

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the culture of use has dictated that field use goes to youth and that field lighting is limited to certain areas and not allowed in others. Under league transformation of fields, the leagues receiving the permit for that space may use the space in a different way than laid out. The most prevalent example is soccer in which most soccer use is not on a regulation-sized field but on much smaller-scaled fields to provide more contact with the ball among younger players. The result is often overuse of an entire field.

Climate greatly affects field use and the need for maintenance. For example, a wet and long winter may make fields unplayable until much later in the season than March. Rain will cause delays to the extent that make-up games become impossible. Climate directly impacts the leagues in the spring and fall when shorter daylight hours limit play.

Ownership of fields in the Region is complex. Over the years, sports leagues pursued field locations wherever they could get land. This has included private lands such as the Kimberton Fire Company and Ludwig’s Corner Horse Show Grounds. Complicating matters further is the fact that some teams practice at private homes, a questionable practice due to safety and liability concerns. Finally, fields that are not permanently protected in public ownership could be lost if current or future owners would retract the use privileges, resulting in very difficult and expensive solutions required to replace them.

PUBLIC SPORTS FIELDS

The field supply shown in *Table A9.3* is for children and youth only. There are no fields for adults. While is a perception that there are a lot of fields in the Region, there are only six diamond fields and six rectangular fields in the public domain including four flat fields that overlay diamond outfields.

Table A9.3: Summary of Public Sports Field Supply in Northern Chester County Parks

Type of Field	Number	Municipal Location	League Users
Dedicated Diamond Fields			
90-foot Baseball	2	North Coventry	Coventry Little League
60-foot Baseball	4	2 in North Coventry 1 in West Vincent 1 in East Vincent	Coventry Little League
Total	6		
Dedicated Rectangular Fields			
Regulation Soccer field	2	2 in West Pikeland	DARC
Multi-use field	3	1 in West Vincent 1 in East Vincent 1 in South Coventry	Coventry Soccer Norchester Red Knights Penn Premiere LAX
Small Soccer field	1	1 in North Coventry	Coventry Soccer
Total	6		
Overlay Fields			
90-ft diamond outfields for Soccer	2	2 in North Coventry	Coventry Soccer
60-ft diamond outfields for Soccer	1	1 in North Coventry	Coventry Soccer
60-ft diamond outfield for Lacrosse	1	1 in East Vincent	Penn Premiere LAX
Total	4		

DARC – Downingtown Area Recreation Commission

SPORTS FIELDS ON PUBLIC SCHOOL GROUNDS

Table A9.4 presents sports fields that are on Owen J. Roberts School District school grounds. The facilities are available first for school district use, then for community recreational use. School activities

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always take precedence. While the school district is generous in making facilities available to the community, demand is high for school purposes. Recreational users are appreciative of getting the use of the facilities and still experience times when permission must be revoked to facilitate school use. This makes scheduling a challenge and difficult for events such as tournaments.

Table A9.4: Sports Fields on Public School Grounds in Northern Chester County

Type of Field	Number	School Location	League Users
Dedicated Diamond Fields			
90-foot Baseball	3	1 OJR High School, 2 OJR Middle School	NYAA, Coventry LL
60-foot Baseball	1	1 North Coventry Elementary School	NYAA, Coventry LL
Total	4		
Dedicated Rectangular Fields			
	3	1 turf field in the stadium 1 north turf field at the HS 1 south turf field at the HS	Coventry Youth LAX Penn Premiere LAX Coventry Wildcats
Total	3		
Overlay Fields			
Total	0		

NYAA - Norchester Youth Athletic Association

SPORTS FIELDS ON PRIVATE LANDS OR LANDS OUTSIDE THE REGION

Table A9.5 presents fields that are on other public lands outside of the study area or on quasi-public lands. Access to these fields is not permanently protected.

Table A9.5: Sports Field Supply on Private Lands or Lands Outside of Region

Type of Field	Number	Municipal Location	League Users
Dedicated Diamond Fields			
70-foot Baseball	2	SFYAL Complex at Spring City Elementary School	SFYAL, includes East Vincent players
60-foot Baseball	9	2 at SFYAL Complex at Spring City Elementary School 4 at Wampler Complex in North Coventry 3 at Kimberton Fire Company	SFYAL, includes East Vincent players
45-foot T-Ball	1	SFYAL Complex at Spring City Elementary School	SFYAL, includes East Vincent players
Total	12		
Dedicated Rectangular Fields			
Regulation soccer field	2	1 at Montgomery School West Pikeland 1 at Parkerford Brethren Church East Coventry	GEYA Coventry Soccer Assn
Small Soccer fields	7	Ludwig's Corner: 1 - 60 x 90 yd 1 - 40 x 60 yd 2 - 25 x 50 yd 3 - 15 x 30 yd	GEYA and Coventry Lacrosse
Total	6		
Overlay Fields			
Total	0		

GEYA - Glenmoore-Eagle Youth Association; SFYAL - Spring-Ford Youth Athletic League

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In addition to the fields shown in *Tables A9.3, A9.4, and A9.5*, another 13 diamond fields and 11 rectangular fields of various sizes are used in municipalities outside of the Region. These include fields on public and private school property, churches, and commercial facilities.

DEMAND FOR ATHLETIC FIELDS

The supply and demand for fields was assessed based on 2010 numbers, considering the following factors: the number of teams, games, practices, season, weekdays and weekends. Consideration of these factors found that each field could accommodate five to seven teams. For the purposes of this plan, the standard of six teams per field was used. A correlation was found between this standard and the standard developed and used in the area by the Lionville Youth Association – one field per 100 players. The numbers applied to this standard included the participants that are from the nine municipalities of the Region. Using this standard, *Table A9.6* presents the fields needed in the Region.

Table A9.6: Diamond (D) and Rectangular (R) Field Needs For Northern Chester County

Diamond Field Sports Leagues	Teams (max. by season)	Seasons	Field Demand (6 teams/field)	Rectangular Field Sports Leagues	Teams (max. by season)	Seasons	Field Demand (6 teams/field)
Baseball Leagues	99		17	Football Leagues	16		3
KYAL	32	Sp	5	Norchester Red Knights	10	F	2
GEYA	15	Sp, F	3	Wildcats	6	F	1
SFYAL	7	Sp, F	1	Lacrosse Leagues	21		4
Coventry LL	28	Sp, F	5	Penn Premiere	5	Sp	1
Phoenixville Babe Ruth	2	Sp	0	Coventry Youth Lacrosse	16	Sp, S, F	3
NYAA	8	Sp, F	1	Soccer Leagues	70		12
LYA	7	Sp, S, F	1	GEYA	4	Sp, S, F	1
Softball Leagues	47		8	LYA	6	Sp, S, F	1
Coventry LL	20	Sp, F	3	Coventry Soccer	60	Sp, S, F	10
KYAL	14	Sp	2				
SFYAL	7	Sp, F	1				
LYA	6	Sp, S, F	1				
Total Diamond Field Demand			25	Total Rectangular Field Demand			19
Public Diamond Field Supply			6	Public Rectangular Field Supply			6
Public Diamond Field Need			19	Public Rectangular Field Need			13

GEYA – Glenmoore-Eagle Youth Association; SFYAL – Spring-Ford Youth Athletic League; LYA – Lionville Youth Association; NYAA – Norchester Youth Athletic Association; KYAL – Kimberton Youth Athletic League

NEED FOR ADDITIONAL ATHLETIC FIELDS

As *Table A9.6* shows, the Region has six diamond fields and six rectangular fields that are in the public recreation domain. Based upon the number of teams engaged in organized sports in the area, an additional 19 diamond fields and 13 rectangular fields are needed.

LAND REQUIREMENT FOR ADDITIONAL FIELD NEEDS

At 3.85 acres for a maximum size diamond field and 2.1 acres for a rectangular field, 100.45 acres is needed to accommodate just the fields. Estimating an additional 25 percent for parking and support facilities, including some non-sport recreation facilities, raises the land need to 125.56 acres. Reserving 33 percent of the total area for resource conservation, the region's highest value, further raises the land need to 166.99 acres.

However, this acreage serves only youth. In order to serve adults, additional land needs to be obtained. Since this plan is for the next 10 years and beyond, it is important to recognize that the Baby Boomer retirees are an active and healthy group that is expected to participate in active healthy living well into their advancing years.

Since the demand for fields for adults is latent, exact calculations cannot be determined at this time. The survey conducted for the Pennsylvania Outdoor Recreation Plans shows that about eight percent of the adult population participates in field sports (eight percent in diamond field sports and eight percent in rectangular field sports) in Southeastern Pennsylvania. Applying eight percent to the 22,000 people ages 20 to 64 who live in the Region yields an estimated latent demand of 1,760 adult participants for each field type. If these players were organized in leagues, they would require 18 fields, again for each field type. This figure seems high in the context of the region's conservation values.

In the absence of more detailed survey data, it is reasonable to assume that eight percent of adults play sports but perhaps not everyone plays in an organized league for scheduled games. Conservatively approximating that one in four adult players would participate in an organized league in the Region results in 440 players and a field need of four diamond (softball) fields and four rectangular fields on another 39.57 acres. These fields would need to be guaranteed for adult use to enable adults to form and sustain organized leagues. When these fields are not scheduled for adult league play, they could be used for informal recreational play by the community. The fields would be developed in phases and their league use monitored over time to determine the need for additional adult fields.

FINDINGS

SPORTS FIELD INVENTORY FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

1. The numerous fields distributed throughout the Region and beyond on public, quasi-public, and private property show the creative approach that leagues have taken in securing places to play ball. Many of these places are not permanently protected from development or dedicated for recreational use. Although they may appear to be secure, without a lease or ownership, privileges to use the land could legally be taken away at any time.
2. Of the many sports fields in the Region, very few are devoted to public recreation. Only six diamond fields (two 90' baseball, four 60' Little League/softball) and five flat fields (two soccer,

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and three multi-use) are public-use fields that meet regulation size for multiple sports; four overlay rectangular fields are played on the outfields of diamond fields in three parks.

3. There are more sports fields owned by sports leagues, local and adjacent school districts, and private owners than owned by municipalities for public use. League, school district, and private fields raise the number of regulation-sized fields to 12 diamond fields and 11 flat fields. These fields are essential to the current demand but school district and private fields do not ensure permanent access by community sports leagues. Their use is subject to owner policies, e.g., primary use for school curriculum and athletics, secondary use by community organizations, e.g., leagues.
4. Extensive field sharing (overlay) occurs in the region. Five diamond fields (and their outfields) and six flat fields each serve at least two leagues of different sports. As long as there are no conflicts, the outfields could be used for such sports as soccer, lacrosse, field hockey, and football. However, interviews revealed that baseball, softball, soccer, and lacrosse are being played in both the spring and fall.
5. Investigation revealed that broadly scattered fields on relatively small park and recreation sites results in a lot of driving around by families taking players to various fields.
6. Every blade of grass counts. Many smaller-than-regulation-size fields and grassed areas, especially on elementary school sites, are adaptively used as game and practice areas.
7. Public field conditions are fair at best. Heavy use to overuse exists, including overlapping use by diamond and rectangular field sports. Lack of turf maintenance contributes to poor field conditions, especially for sports where field conditions matter, e.g., soccer.
8. Lack of optimal orientation has not limited community league play. Of the public recreation fields, only the Batdorf Baseball Field is optimal in orientation. Fields on league and school lands raise the numbers to nine diamond fields and three flat fields. Optimal orientation is required when building new fields using public grants.
9. While there is no gradation of fields based on quality of play from recreational-, training-, or tournament-level play, there is somewhat of an informal structure for quality of play. Generally, community park fields are maintained at the recreational play level. School district fields with their synthetic turf, field lighting, and stadium seating qualify as tournament-level fields. It is fitting and appropriate to have a range of field types to foster a range of play from instructional to recreational, to skill development and competitive higher-level play, to offer a range of experiences.
10. There is only one lighted public-use field in the Region: Scherfel Field at Kenilworth Park. There are no lighted public-use fields for Little League/Softball, soccer, football, or lacrosse. Lighted fields used after sundown can help meet the need for field time, however, community attitudes toward evening play and environmental impacts should be considered.
11. Field drainage and parking capacity are reported problems at several sites. Some of these conditions may be due to poor siting of a field(s).
12. While the focus of this study was primarily on outdoor facilities, leagues and the school district also posited that there is not enough gym space to accommodate the demand. Even for school district

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programs alone, gym space is extremely tight. When recreational leagues are considered, there are not enough gyms to accommodate use. Just how much more space is needed in gyms is difficult to determine as people have stopped asking to use the facilities and no new leagues are forming due to lack of space.

13. Twenty-five diamond fields are needed to sustain the baseball, softball, and Little League organizations. Only six public fields are currently available. Nineteen additional diamond fields are needed.
14. Nineteen rectangular flat fields are needed to sustain the soccer, football, field hockey and lacrosse organizations. Only six public fields are currently available. Thirteen additional rectangular flat fields are needed.
15. Additional land to develop 19 diamond field and 13 rectangular flat fields for youth sports leagues totals 167 acres. Another 40 acres is needed to provide diamond and rectangular flat fields for future adult sports leagues.