

Memorial Stadium Update

Project Intent:

The City has only one field at Memorial Stadium to serve the youth & adult recreational sport needs of Asheville (John B Lewis was leased to ABYSA exclusively for soccer in 2019). In order to best utilize this limited resource, Memorial Stadium has always been intended to be a permanently blended line multi-sport field. These permanent markings accommodate a variety of sports and provide equitable athletic programming space for Asheville athletes, without the need for additional operational support from City staff or from specific athletic programs with limited resources.

Background:

The [Memorial Stadium athletic needs assessment](#) was contracted in 2017 with the goal of analyzing the ability of the current stadium, field, and related facilities to meet the programming and operational needs of the City's athletic stakeholders. Stakeholder meetings were organized by Parks & Recreation staff and facilitated by the consultant to better understand what is currently working, needs improvement, and other facility programming desired.

Recommendation:

Based on the feedback from user groups in the needs assessment, the recommendation was to maintain the current dimensions of the overall field to provide a blended line field that matches with the existing sports. (Football, Soccer, & Flag Football) . This would support all users identified including but not limited to: Football, Soccer, Ultimate Frisbee, Lacrosse, Field Hockey, Rugby, & Flag Football.

Advantages:

- Cost-effective way to get more athletics on the ground.
- The City can host not just two, three or more sports, but even tournaments for smaller and younger kids where the field size is different.
- The City has the ability to be much more flexible.
- Reduces operational time requirements for striping and managing field users seasonal needs.
- Recreation sports do not prohibit the use of blended line fields.
- User groups have been playing on a blended line field for decades at Memorial Stadium. The athletes are not distracted by it. They are more focused on playing, it's like the other lines disappear.

Disadvantages:

- Doesn't accommodate sports that require single use striping as striping can not be removed.
- Cost more to install.

Decision:

Should we no longer provide permanent striping for multiple athletic programs and commit additional City of Asheville financial resources to provide painted field striping to accommodate single sport use of Memorial Stadium. This is a request of Asheville City Soccer and Buncombe County Sports Commission.

Project Outreach:

September 2017 - East End/Oakhurst Neighborhood Association

November 2017 - Facility User Group input meeting

December 2017 - Oakhurst Association Members

June 2018 - Oakhurst Neighborhood Association meeting

August 2018 - East End Neighborhood Association

February 2019 - Memorial Stadium Bond Presentation to CMO & DD's (internal)

April 2019 - Presentation - East End/Valley Street and Oakhurst

May 2019 - Memorial Stadium presentation to TDA/Sports Commission representatives

July 2019 - East End/Oakhurst Neighborhood Association

August 2019 - City-wide Community Meeting

September 2019 - Update to Recreation Advisory Board

October 2019 - Memorial Parking policy discussions (internal)

November 2019 - Facility User Group Meeting

May 2021 - Email to user groups/stakeholders about construction contract on Council agenda