

# Technical Memorandum:

## Dover High School Sports Complex: A Review and Recommendations on the Reconstruction of the Dover High School Athletics Complex

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### Department of Planning and Community Development

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Date: June 12, 2025

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As Dover's Director of Planning and Community Development, I write to acknowledge the important decision the City Council has to make regarding the proposed Dover High School Complex Renovation and Reconstruction project. After 13 years of experience as a planning professional, I can understand the concerns of an artificial turf and the potential impact that may have on the athletes, environment, and budget. In my role as Director of Planning and Community Development, I want to remind policy makers of our community's master plan and recommendations and actions within the living document.

#### Overview:

This memo outlines the related recommendations found within the Master Plan regarding the improvements, replacement and maintenance of recreational facilities at the Dover High School and other locations throughout the city. As discussed in previous conversations during City Council meetings and as noted in the Recreation and Facilities Chapters of the Master Plan, upkeep and maintenance of our recreation facilities can be a challenge. Having a synthetic turf field which can be made more available than natural grass can then off-set some of the impact we've seen on our other recreational fields throughout the city and allow for a balance to the environmental concerns and the recreational demand. Dover's Master Plan is updated chapter by chapter utilizing consultants and a steering committee of dedicated volunteers. The Recreation Master Plan Chapter was last updated in 2020 and is set to be updated again in approximately five (5) years. The Department understands and acknowledges the concerns raised about synthetic turf and wants to outline the recommendations listed in the Master Plan.

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#### Highlights from the Master Plan regarding Athletic Fields:

1. In the Implementation Table of the Culture and Recreation Chapter of the Master Plan under Dover High School, the Master Plan lists, "Install artificial turf on specific athletic field" within a short timeframe of 3 to 5 years.

This goal came about from survey results that were taken as part of the public engagement efforts when updating this chapter. When respondents were asked what would make Dover recreation better, answers included synthetic turf. I should point out other respondents wrote in with concerns about toxic chemicals. The steering committee reviewed those responses from surveys and tabling events, discussed, completed site visits and analyses of each recreational facility and field, and moved

forward with recommending installing turf at the High School which was adopted by the Planning Board as part of the Culture and Recreation Master Plan in 2020.

2. The same recommendation section of the Master Plan also states, “Balance field usage to enable maintenance to be accomplished on fields in need of repair on a regular basis”.

Having a combination of natural grass and synthetic turf options would be a strategic choice for the community to allow a balance of providing enough field space and enough rest time and maintenance for grass fields to be used.

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**Conclusion:**

The Master Plan specifically lists installing synthetic field at the Dover High School in the Recreation Chapter of the Master Plan adopted in 2020. The Master Plan serves as a guiding document for the community and should be used as a tool for staff, appointed and elected officials in their decision-making.

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**Recommendation:**

Proceed with the approval and funding of a synthetic turf field at Dover High School per the Master Plan recommendation which will allow better maintenance of other recreational facilities as also discussed in the Master Plan.

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